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# All Guns Blazing!

## Newsletter of the Naval Wargames Society

### No. 225 – JULY 2013

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#### EDITORIAL

Welcome to new members, David Constable, Martin Wallbank and Ken Ball. The more members the better for any Club or Society, to keep it vibrant and fresh. So it is pleasing to see a steady stream of new members and existing members renewing. The new members have just missed the Explosion Museum Naval Wargames Weekend but there are lots of other good things in the pipeline. Not least, the next edition of "BATTLEFLEET". Planned for October, if you have an article for inclusion, comments on rule sets, photographs etc, please send them in good time, formatted in Times new Roman font size 12 to [Chorney.jeff@gmail.com](mailto:Chorney.jeff@gmail.com). Several people were taking photographs at Explosion; these would be ideal for inclusion in Battlefleet – so get them in!

The Staines War Games Group refought Trafalgar in June and I for one was gutted I could not get there on the day. See the photographs below.

Somewhere in the world, the sun is over the yardarm.

Norman Bell  
[normanpivc@gmail.com](mailto:normanpivc@gmail.com)

#### VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

July 2013

Chairman: Stuart Barnes-Watson

July witnessed a Naval Wargames Show held at the Explosion Museum, Gosport, Hampshire, England. Small but focused and representative of why our hobby is so special. From biremes to helos, sea serpents to cod, every genre was on display.

The subsequent AGM was not well attended (members scurrying home citing 'must be going'), but is maybe a reflection on the fact that the committee is welcome to the job and has the right people to continue! Hope so, as that is the result.

Stuart Barnes-Watson Chairman

Simon Stokes Membership Secretary & Treasurer

Norman Bell Editor 'All Guns Blazing'

Jeff Chorney Editor 'Battlefleet'

The website was the major issue. At length it was decided that a professional was required to re create the site and adjust it to ever changing technology. This will cost money. The surplus membership monies in account will pay for it this year, plus hoped for dealer sponsorship. In the future it is our hope that AGB will be simply added to website for all to read, membership payable by PayPal, with an updated calendar of events and links to manufacturers. In short, the only website a naval wargamer, modeller or collector needs!

Your continued support is vital in this, and as such I urge you to renew your membership asap.

Email: [stuart\\_barnes\\_watson@hotmail.com](mailto:stuart_barnes_watson@hotmail.com) or call 01271 866637

Explosion Museum – Wargame Weekend 22<sup>nd</sup> / 23<sup>rd</sup> June. A few words from Norman Bell.

Something for everyone surely. Both days saw impressive models all round; whether it was the Battling Galleys, by the Solent Wargames Club, Camperdown by the Inshore Squadron, the Cold War warming up as NATO and the Soviet Union clash in the Mediterranean near Crete in a “what if” scenario dated 1991.

WWII was represented by the Luftwaffe trying to stop a supply convoy into Tobruk and getting creamed in the process. The “Cockleshell Heroes” participation game was popular – could you get your two man canoe up the River Girande, past the guards and attach your limpet mines to the vessels in Bordeaux? Also Mongoose Publishing were there giving a preview of their new Rules, “Victory at Sea” and their new range of waterline models. After a quick briefing of the rules, I had a go with the Battle of the River Plate Battle Set; and we’ll call this one a draw as the Graf Spee and my HMS EXETER both received heavy damage. Dave Manley brought along the “Cod Wars”, last seen at Salute. I was doing O.K. until the last turn when I managed to ram (no, surely more of a glancing blow) a Leander Class frigate into a trawler she was supposed to be protecting. Success handed to Stuart and the Icelandic Coastguard. I’ll have to buck my ideas up before I get a reputation as someone who repeatedly snatches defeat from the jaws of victory.



The Mongoose Publishing, Battle of the River Plate Set. Additional Ships and Battle Sets will shortly be on the shelves.

	<b>What you saw or missed</b>
David Manley	Sails of Glory
	Cod War
Simon Stokes	WW2 Coastal forces
Solent Wargames Group (Mark Backhouse)	1/2400 'Hail Agrippa' Actium participation
	1/600 ACW
	20mm Sudan
The Inshore Squadron (Mark Barker)	Battle of Camperdown
Wayne Pocock	Battle of the Yellow Sea 1/3000
Jeff Crane	Keshian Civil War (Man o War)
Rob Kirk	WW2 Coastal
	Tudor Naval Battle
George Street	Shipwreck Modern 1/6000
Mongoose Publishing	Victory at Sea 1/1800
The Anchorage (SBW)	1/1200 trade table

Well done to all who helped.

Some photos from the Explosion event have been uploaded to the NWS Yahoo group photos section by Simon. They're in the album Explosion 2013.

Bruce Dawson has been out and about.

Just got back from Western Canada yesterday...There is a well publicised maritime history museum in Vancouver, but I also did a long day tour from Vancouver to Victoria Island. The tour rightly plugs the big B.C. museum in Victoria (which is also the British Columbia State capital), but when I arrived there 'hawkeye' here also spotted a pavement sandwich board sign to a Maritime Museum in Victoria; location the old courthouse in small Bastion Square, not far from the centrally located harbour.

It turned out to be a surprisingly low key but super 3-story place. Small areas each dedicated to a theme.... maritime exploration and early colonisation of the north-west Pacific/B.C. coast, whaling, defence of British Columbian colony and Canadian west Pacific coast (primarily against the 19th century yanks), Canadian and British Columbia shipping companies (including a room of excellent ship models made by the companies and including one of a small (but fast 16 knot) liner sunk in Aug 1942 between Port Said and Cyprus), B.C.ferry companies history, and several further themes including the one- log native canoe two blokes (albeit one a sea captain!) adapted into a sailing ketch and sailed across the Pacific including popping over the South Atlantic to South America on their way to London 1901 to 1903!! All told, well worth a visit for \$Canadian 12.50 (approx £8).

Andy Field came up with some info for the question in June's AGB.

In answer to Rob Morgan's query about the message on the screen seen in "New Scientist", can I offer up the following? I'm sure other members will have provided the same or similar information.

In Chapter 2 of his book, "The Art of Wargaming", Peter Perla mentions the early days of wargaming at the US Naval War College. This seemed to have been composed of two elements; one was in 1887 when Commodore Luce placing his North Atlantic Squadron at the disposal of the college for manoeuvres, principally a night torpedo attack and a bombardment of the city of Newport followed by an amphibious landing. These probably reflected the US's concerns. The US Navy had only laid down modern cruisers three years before and was unable to conduct fleet actions at this time. Many saw the main threat as being coastal attacks by the British fleet.

According to Perla, wargaming really took off in the 1890s, mirroring the growth of the US Navy itself, and two types of game were played, one of which was a strategic, fleet action game, and the second seemed to have been based on "The Duel", a single ship action. This seems to have been based, or adapted from Captain Phillip Colomb's game, published in 1875 and described in detail in GG Lewin's "War Games And Their History", on pages 57-59. This was a game played by two players and an umpire, with two ships fighting each other as each player tried to ram his opponent or sink his enemy's ship with gunfire. Moves were a minute for the first phase and thirty seconds for the second. All moves went through the umpire and were presumably tracked by him on paper. Gaming time was short, a sample game being completed in 10 minutes.

So, in brief, although there were naval wargames developed, both commercially and by naval officers, (Lewin's book gives an excellent summary of all of these), its likely that there wasn't too much actual naval wargaming in the US Naval War College until the 1890s, as was the case in the Royal Navy. Tactical ideas were debated and sometimes tried out in fleet manoeuvres and exercises, but generally each flag officer developed his own ideas and practiced them with their fleets. Young naval officers would have to wait for Jane and his Naval War Game before he could manoeuvre fleets in battle.

Peter Perla's book has been reprinted by John Curry and I bought Lewin's book last year after a review in "All Guns Blazing"!

Thank you Andy.

The mention of Walcheren in June's AGB brought these words from Rob Morgan. "It was a furious combined operation which might well suit the wargames table. There were for instance over 100 Allied minesweepers involved in clearing the Scheldt and opening Antwerp, even before the German garrison on Walcheren Island and South Beveland surrendered. It was a deadly five week battle, October 1st- November 8th, including almost every type of assault craft and landing craft used by the Allies in WWII, and there were tremendous casualties on both sides. The naval involvement was vast, and the first convoy entered Antwerp on November 27th, by which time German naval involvement was reduced to some small scale attacks by 'Marders', 'Bibers' and similar suicide vessels".

**TRAFALGAR! By the Staines War Games Group.**



The captured Royal Sovereign

See the NWS Yahoo Group for more photographs. Impressive and a good time was had by all. David Manley's blog includes these words; "The game was a whole load of fun. Excellent models, good company and fought out in extremely good spirits (and with a fine pub just down the road for lunch). I'm so glad I went".

The Howell Torpedo.

I notice that the US Navy Undersea Museum reports the discovery of a c.1870-90 Howell Torpedo off California. It was found by a trained dolphin apparently. The site has a delightful photograph of one of the torpedoes being launched from a tube mounted aboard USS Stiletto. The Howell was entirely polished brass by the look of the photo of a single example at the Museum near Washington DC and is described as 'a masterpiece of invention', some eleven feet long, capable of 25 knots and with an effective range of 700 yards(!). It seems that after 1895 the weapon was removed from service, but surprisingly, the site says there were only 50 built and issued to the US Navy, which seems a remarkably small number. Probably had something to do with the 'early models' having a tendency to stop dead in the water, as it mentions. Nice looking device, anyone know any more about them?

Rob Morgan.  
June 2013.

## Warships of the Ancient World.

Osprey 'New Vanguard' No. 196. Adrian Wood. Illustrated by Giuseppe Rava.

Now here's an unusual Osprey! I paid the full price of £9.99 for it at Waterstones. Mind you I do have a few quibbles about the new (Spring 2013) title though; topographical photographs for instance, of which there are no fewer than seven in the booklet, are of little value in a publication which cries out 'The Sea! The Sea!'

The booklet's text begins with a chronology, extremely useful in any attempt to cover 2,500 years of war at sea, the book not quite reaching Salamis (480 BC), but it is a vast period indeed. I should, and this is an arguable point, like to have seen the material, which is divided into five sections, made into three different Osprey titles. Osprey's sections are Egypt, Minoan Crete, Bronze Age Syria, Phoenicia and Early Greece; and the last of these sections leads directly and quite neatly to the excellent New Vanguard 132 'Ancient Greek Warship 500-322 BC' and to Campaign 222 'Salamis 480 BC'. It's linked to these two that the text from page 30 on, a good third of it, and much of the illustrative material should and could belong. A similar 'independent' point could probably be made for the opening section on Egypt and Ramses II's splendid fleets, and his 'Sea Peoples' enemies.

However, despite what I think is a slightly 'cramped' feel of the volume overall, two of the 'select secondary sources' quoted; Torr who wrote the excellent 'Ancient Ships' as long ago as 1895, and Wallinga in the hefty Brill edition 'Ships & Sea Power before the Great Persian War' of the 1990's are more thorough than any Osprey could hope to be, and can and should be used alongside this booklet for deeper insight and clarity, which I thought sometimes a problem. Still, Wood's text reads well enough for the wargamer and modeller, and the colour plates, twelve of them in all, magnificently presented by the artist Giuseppe Rava do tend to whet the appetite and set one looking through the Ancients and Classical lists of model manufacturers. If you need inspiration, look at the Minoan Galley, the lower illustration on Plate C page 19- absolutely delightful; but no manufacturer I know of makes one- if any member reading this knows of a suitable Minoan model, do tell me- and as I write I have a small selection of 1/600<sup>th</sup> Triton, 1/2400<sup>th</sup> 'Tumbling Dice' and a couple of old Falcon Miniatures and even older Knight Designs 1/1200<sup>th</sup> and 1/2000<sup>th</sup> models sitting here, while I try to find some inspiration! All of the coloured plates are inspirational. The ferocious black and red Pentakonter and Triakonter of the Early Greeks look ready for the table top, the 'Tumbling Dice' models of these ships are excellent value in 1/2400<sup>th</sup> incidentally. The Xyston 1/600ths are of collectors standards. Consider what a vessel the highly decorative, speedy Samaina of Polycrates looks, it really needs to be discovered by a manufacturer and produced in 1/300<sup>th</sup>, or 1/600<sup>th</sup>. Again a conversion form the 'Dice' range looks the best bet around. In my own 'Ancient' set up the Phoenician Bireme shown at Plate D is the 'chosen' warship, squat and lethal, with a wicked looking ram, but I prefer coloured shields to the burnished ones shown in the plate. The Triton Bireme, in 1/600<sup>th</sup> only needs a 1/1200<sup>th</sup> square sail from the Skytrex Napoleonic ships boat set to be centred, slightly towards the bow on the upper deck and the Bireme looks perfect. This is a delightful model and has the 'transport' from the same range as a consort, needing similar treatment, but the pack price charged by the company these days is astronomical for such a simple model. It's around six pounds for two these days!

I recommend this book for several reasons. Not for its in depth analysis of the strangely beautiful and murderously elegant warships of that huge chunk of Mediterranean history, but because it can and does provide exactly what it says on the cover- provide an attractive booklet on six or seven warships which are readily available in model form in several scales and are easily wargamable, and another four or five warships which deserve to be!

Rob Morgan.

June 2013.

'Military History Monthly' for July 2013 (available I'm told at Smiths) although largely occupied with Richard III, lately found in a car park and well inland, has some interesting naval items. David Parker begins a two part illustrated article on naval gun power, which reads well, and there's a short article on the 16th century Korean Turtle ship. A lovely design, and somewhere I have an old 1/2000th Knight Designs fleet of them, but I can't think of a manufacturer of 'Turtle's' these days. In fact early eastern war vessels, though stunningly powerful and attractive, are a much neglected part of naval wargaming. One point which might be of note is that the writer Eric Bryan says that 'the turtle-ship design was used into the 19th century'. Can anyone confirm that?

The last naval item is a brief single page on the M Class of submarines, whence they came and where they went, the three of them. Plenty of useful adverts and reviews too.

Rob Morgan.  
June 2013.

#### Armed Forces Day - Portsmouth



Armed Forces Day raised awareness of the vital role that our Armed Forces, past and present, have made and make, to our security and well being.

Portsmouth marked the day with a ceremony on Thursday 27th June, a parade of Armed Forces personnel, cadets and veterans, marched onto the Guildhall Square led by The Royal Marine's Band.

Part of the ceremony, attended by the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth, Members of Portsmouth City Council and senior representatives of the Armed Forces, was a special presentation to Arctic Convoy veterans of their Arctic Star medals by Rear Admiral John Lang DL, Deputy Lieutenant of Hampshire, representing Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant, and the Second Sea Lord, Vice Admiral David Steel CBE.

#### **Armed Forces Weekend Ships Open to Visitors - 29th & 30th June at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard**

Portsmouth Historic Dockyard celebrated Armed Forces Weekend with a series of FREE events hosted by the Royal Navy, the National Museum of the Royal Navy and Action Stations. Plus the opportunity to go aboard two of the Navy's famous warships HMS WESTMINSTER and HMS DEFENDER



## **Armed Forces Day Celebration**

The National Museum of the Royal Navy is keeping tradition strong, celebrating the British Armed Forces throughout the years from Tudor Times to the present day, witnessing how clothing, navigation and weapons used by the Royal Navy have changed.



With HMS Victory providing the spectacular backdrop, the arena alongside was transformed. Setting the scene, a variety of military vehicles and people dressed in 1940s style. Visitors could taste eggless fruitcake; a wartime rationing favourite - plus, the chance to fire a field gun, take part in Tudor games and children could make their own bunting and edible medals!

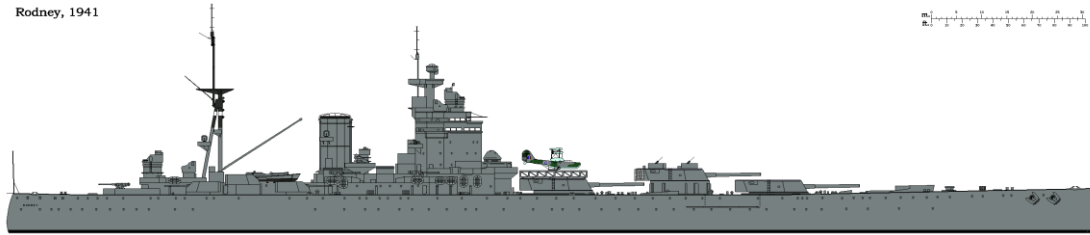
Most importantly there was a chance to speak to the veterans, hear their stories and reminisce about days gone by. Museum curators were also on hand to help visitors discover more about the history of the Royal Navy.

Other attractions for a family day out were:

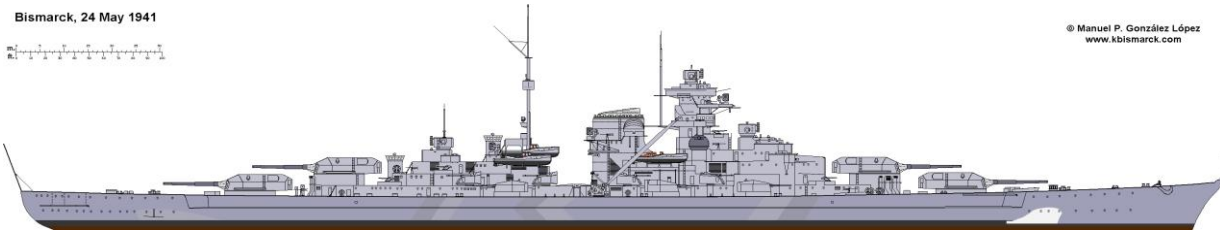
Fire Fighting Demonstrations by the Royal Navy at the Mast Pond in front of Action Stations. challenge the Navy on the climbing wall, take on the Marines in Laser Quest, tie yourself up in knots and meet serving members of the Armed Forces.

This was a fun occasion for all the family and a chance for visitors to show their support for the contribution made by all veterans. It is believed that veterans, their families, serving personnel and visitors marked Armed Forces Weekend 2013 in great style.

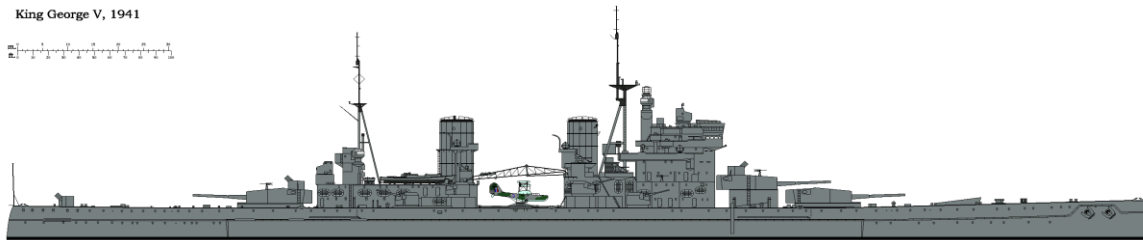
Rodney, 1941



Bismarck, 24 May 1941



King George V, 1941



## **SINK THE BISMARCK Part 2.**

(Naval Thunder, Battleship Row, Bitter Rivals Rule Set)

Suffering some superstructure and secondary armament damage only, as a result of the clash in the Denmark Strait with HMS HOOD and HMS PRINCE OF WALES (See May's AGB); the BISMARCK was heading for the safety of France when a lucky strike by a torpedo from a Swordfish biplane jammed her rudder. Now struggling to do anything other than circle to port the crew know that Royal Navy capital ships are closing. The Admiral has just finished a broadcast to the crew, to say that U-Boats and an ocean going tug are racing to their aid and that the main armament is undamaged, when the alarm is given and the Ship comes under air attack again. Surely the bristling AA Guns will deal with those obsolete biplanes this time.

The Royal Navy is determined to sink the Bismarck. Fuel shortage has forced HMS HOOD to follow HMS PRINCE OF WALES back to Reykjavik but not before shadowing the BISMARCK and bringing RODNEY and KGV to the scene. However these Ships also have fuel concerns and a speedy conclusion is required or the Bismarck may escape to fight another day. There is just time for one last attack by Swordfish before the Battleships clash.

The shadowing cruiser, HMS SHEFFIELD, passes distance and bearing information by signal lamp to the overhead Swordfish. Brave men in canvas and wood aircraft with open cockpits, that would not look out of place over the trenches of Flanders in the Great War line up to attack the World's most powerful Battleship.





### ***820 Squadron Swordfish returning to Ark Royal after the attack on Bismarck***

The aircraft try and line up for a torpedo attack on the Bismarck which is incapable of avoiding action apart from varying her turn to port. Multiple AA Guns open up but the slow speed of the Swordfish result in much of the hailstorm of hot lead passing ahead of the attackers. The Swordfish drop their torpedoes at long range and score no hits. All of the aircraft have various degrees of damage but all make a safe return to the carrier.

There is no time for rest on the Bismarck. No sooner has the air attack finished then the alarm is given as smoke and capital ship masts are spotted on the horizon to the North East. The RODNEY's silhouette is easily recognised and the Germans know that her 16 inch guns are even bigger than the Bismarck's. The RN plan is to divide the Bismarck's fire, stay at long range use the superior gunfire of two ships to pound the Bismarck before fuel restrictions or U-Boats become a factor. The damaged catapult on Bismarck meant that the float plane had been pushed over the side the day before. The two Royal Navy spotter Walrus aircraft are already in the sky, performing a delicate balancing act of being near enough to Bismarck to be useful but not near enough to be shot down. Their fall of shot reports may be the difference between success and failure.

1. Admiral Tovey orders HMS KING GEORGE V to turn to starboard while HMS RODNEY attempts to cross the stern of the enemy. At long range the first shots are fired.

To be continued.....

The following comes from Rob Morgan.

## "CRUSADES".

A while ago I reviewed this excellent publication (ISSN 1476-5276), which isn't I'll admit on every library shelf, for a number of medieval journals. Volume 7, for 2008 has a superb piece by the well known John H.Pryor, entitled "*A View from the Masthead; The First Crusade from the Sea*". It's between pages 87-152 if you want to acquire a copy through the British Library scheme. It approaches the Crusade from a different angle and one ideal for naval wargamers!

As Pryor says, 'For the most part, the story of the First Crusade has been told from the saddle of a warriors horse, the cloister of a monk, or the stance of a foot-soldier, woman or camp follower.' Which is true. He considers the expedition from the point of view of the mariner, Christian or Muslim, in a fascinating new perspective on the major military event of the medieval period, at least as far as Western Europe and Byzantium were concerned.

He provides an overview of western naval forces, well detailed down to the matter of campaign provisions, Venetian sailors got a decent 2.81 litres of wine a day! While his account of the northern maritime forces brought into the 'war zone' off Outremer is useful, not only for details of ships, he suggests incidentally, that many ships which arrived became 'Greek' rather quickly, but also as a background to a campaign.

His dealing with Byzantium's 'ebb and flow', it wasn't a total, terminal decline at sea, is sadly short, but I did like his view of the Fatimid Fleet. Pryor considers the ships in this war, and their likely similarity to modern constructions from archaeological evidence, the Skudelev ships in particular. He's convincing, and clearly far more than merely a few war galleys saw action. All in all, for those looking for the broader perspective in Crusading naval warfare, his article, backed by judicious use of one or two of the better ship model ranges available in 1/600<sup>th</sup>,

1/1200<sup>th</sup> and 1/2400<sup>th</sup>, 'Triton', 'Langton Miniatures', 'Outpost' and particularly inexpensive for larger actions, the 'Tumbling Dice' ships, provides a splendid opportunity for an early Mediterranean action or two. Worth reading.

Also worth naval wargamers reading from the same issue is J.M.Jensen's '*Forgotten Crusade: Greenland 1400-1523*' pages 199-215, a real lost cause!

## **SIGNAL PAD!**

6<sup>th</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> July. Battlegroup South has a wargames weekend at the Bovington Tank Museum.

<http://www.battlegroupsouth.org/>

20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> July. Attack! Devizes, Wiltshire. <http://www.ddwg.org.uk/>

18<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> July. Historicon. The Fredericksburg Exposition Center, Virginia. [www.HISTORICON.org](http://www.HISTORICON.org)

28<sup>th</sup> July. Penkridge Wargames tabletop sale, Staffordshire. <http://penkridgewargames.webs.com/>

Looking further to the future – September 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>. Colours. Newbury Racecourse. [www.colours.org.uk](http://www.colours.org.uk)  
The NWS plan to put on a participation game.

The Shows above are only some of the total out there. If you know of a wargames event let me know and I'll gladly include the details in AGB. If you go to one of these or any other show, how about sending in a few words of a review for All Guns Blazing? We have members in many countries, so you may have information of a show that is not readily available to me.

### **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).

Or email Simon, NWS Membership Secretary. [simonjohnstokes@aol.com](mailto:simonjohnstokes@aol.com)

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## **NWS Events and Regional Contacts, 2013**

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### **NWS Northern Fleet – Falkirk East Central Scotland**

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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.

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- 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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**Devon and the West Country**

Naval Wargames afternoon/evening/all day on a regular basis.

Contact Stuart Barnes Watson to arrange the details.

[stuart\\_barnes\\_watson@hotmail.com](mailto:stuart_barnes_watson@hotmail.com)

3 Clovelly Apartments, Oxford Park, Ilfracombe, DEVON, EX34 9JS

Tel: 01271 866637

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