



All Guns Blazing!

Newsletter of the Naval Wargames Society

No. 256 – FEBRUARY 2016

EDITORIAL

Many thanks to Members for responding to the request for articles for “Battlefleet”. We now have another bumper edition and a couple of items to carry over for the next edition! Don’t become complacent though; NWS relies on many hands making light work and original articles or notice of any existing books, websites of interest etc are always welcome. Also we have a new editor of Battlefleet to take over from Dave Manley. Well done Stuart Fieldhouse for stepping into the breach. The standard of Battlefleet is very high but with Members help Stuart will be able to keep the standards up. As stated we have a couple of articles already to get Stuart off to a flying start.

Welcome to new Members, Ned and Brad.

Anyone who is a fan of the “Terminator” films (and let’s be honest, who isn’t a fan) will have qualms about, “Unmanned Warrior”, the large scale



Unmanned Warrior will take place off the west coast of Scotland
[Pictures: Crown Copyright]

demonstration of maritime autonomous systems. Hosted by the Royal Navy in the autumn of 2016, the latest unmanned system technologies will be on show including air, surface and sub-surface vehicles and sensors from 40 participants including the US Navy and the NATO Centre for Maritime Research and Experimentation. We are on the path, some would say downward slope, of increased use of unmanned, autonomous systems delivering maritime capability. Watch this space for reports of weird electrical phenomena and figures appearing in ball lightning.

I’ll be back in March’s AGB. (See what I did there?)

Norman Bell

Rob Morgan delves into the 1950s for the Quiz each month.

Sea Quiz 48 answers.....

Well, apart from question 4, all these were straightforward, but apparently the anti-destroyer exercises sometimes went awry, in a big way!

1. These were HMS's Whiting, Herring and Mackerel. (HMS Porpoise was mentioned too, by the way).
2. She was tender to the old Ship of the Line HMS Duncan.
3. OXO- because they stopped that sinking feeling. (hm?).
4. It was the German Gunboat OTTER. Originally the mast was intended for the Battlecruiser Von der Tann, but she was given a pole mast and the pylon chopped down (!!!!) to size for the little gunboat!
5. It was the Battleship HMS Ocean in 1900.

I wonder what they did with what was left over of the pylon mast?

SEA QUIZ 49.

A group of less than commonplace questions this month. As was the case so often, one question, number 5 in this case caused a good debate among readers...I suppose no-one in the NWS ever writes in though?

1. In what year did the 'Barnaby era' begin?
2. Name the first armoured warship to circumnavigate the globe.
3. The first British vessel fitted with a bow torpedo tube was...?
4. In 1914, three European navies had a ship named after 'St. George' in service. Which?
5. Define a cannonade.....

Good luck....

Rob Morgan.

After-Action Report from Andy Field which used Paul Rohrbaugh's "*Duel of Iron; The Battle of Hampton Roads, March 8-9 1862*", available from Paul's "High Flying Dice Games website, www.HFDGames.com.

Federal Naval Defeat at Hampton Roads, March 1862.

In a naval action lasting two days, over March 8th and 9th, Union naval forces suffered a grave defeat at the hands of the Confederate forces which included their new ironclad ram, *Virginia*, formerly the Union frigate *Merrimac* which had been burned to the waterline when naval dockyard at Norfolk was abandoned.

The Union forces, which included the large steam frigates, *Minnesota* and *Roanoke* the older frigates *St Lawrence* and *Congress* and the sloop *Cumberland*, were operating in support of General McClellan's forces, advancing up the James Peninsula, towards the Confederacy's capital of Richmond.



Federal steam frigate USS *Minnesota* in 1857 (illustration from Wikipedia)

Taking advantage of the grounding of USS *Congress* and the temporary disablement of USS *Roanoke*, which had engine problems, a Confederate naval force of *Virginia* supported by gunboats, sortied from the Elizabeth River with the intention of engaging the Union forces.

In the event, the action on the 8th March was largely inconclusive, and if anything, seemed to be advantageous to the Union forces. The large, deep-draught, Confederate ironclad seemed content to steam around her enemies, avoiding action and succeeding only in ramming and sinking the stationary USS *Roanoke* before

returning to her anchorage after one hour. Her accompanying gunboats bore the brunt of the fighting and both the side-wheelers, *Jamestown* and *Patrick Henry* were damaged, whilst the screw gunboat *Beaufort*, steaming between the Union steam frigate *Minnesota* and her intended target, *Virginia*, was rammed and sunk, although *Minnesota*, was herself severely damaged in the action.

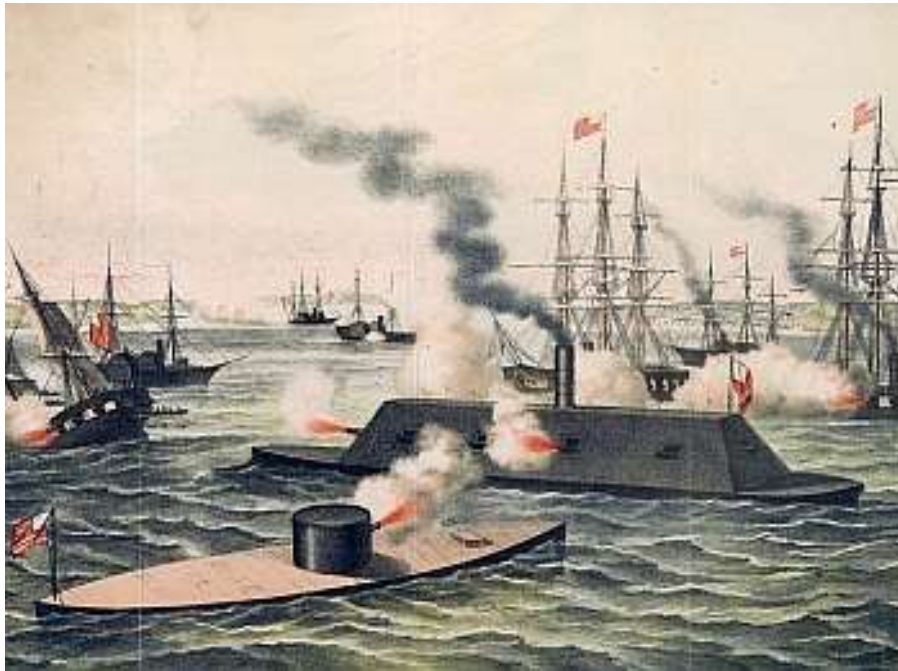
Overnight, however the Union squadron was reinforced by the new, turret ironclad, *Monitor*, a large, side-wheeler ram, the requisitioned steamer, *Vanderbilt*, and the smaller armed tug, USS *Dragon*. On the 9th, whilst the larger steam frigates, including the damaged *Minnesota*, remained anchored under the guns of shore batteries, USS *Monitor* steamed into Hampton Roads, seeking battle.

CSS *Virginia* left her anchorage, accompanied by the repaired *Jamestown*, aiming to engage the Union ironclad.



CSS *Virginia* and her squadron steam out to battle, 9th March 1862 (illustration from Wikipedia)

Monitor opened fire first, but as her gunners had been instructed not to use full charges, her shot merely bounced off the enemy ironclad's casemate. *Virginia*'s return fire hit and damaged the Union monitor, which, in reply, commenced fire using full charges, with disastrous consequences.



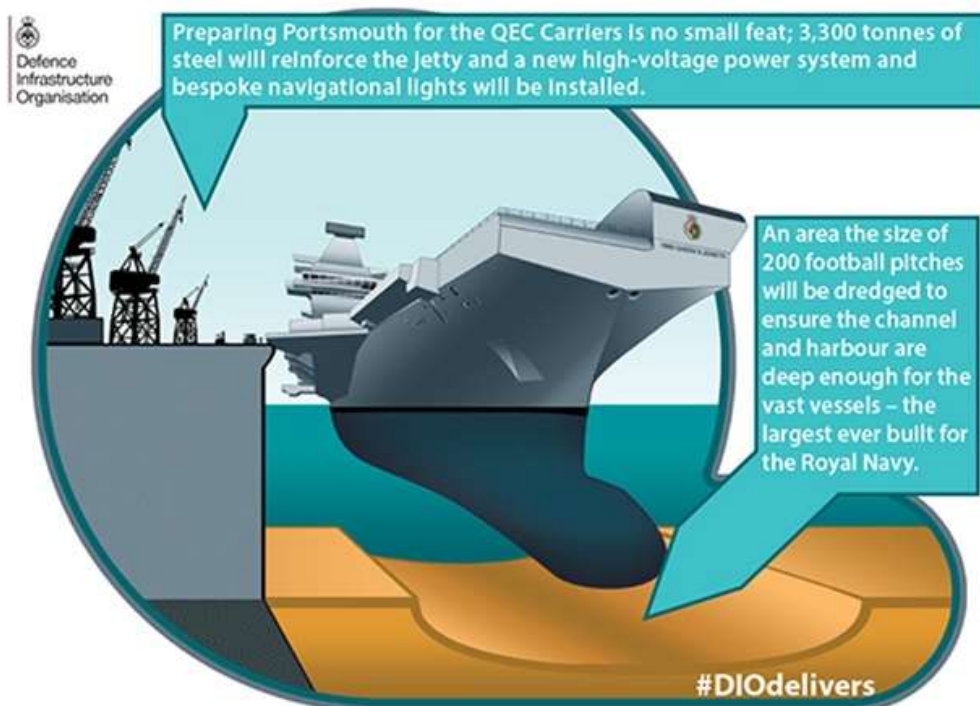
USS *Monitor* and CSS *Virginia* trade shots as the battle rages around them
(Illustration from Wikipedia)

Almost immediately, one of her guns exploded, wrecking the turret and causing considerable damage and casualties. The combination of this, and *Virginia*'s fire, reduced *Monitor* to half speed, temporarily unable to return fire. Seeing her in trouble, both *Vanderbilt* and *St Lawrence* sailed to her assistance. *Monitor* hove-to whilst attempting to repair her damage, and was fortunate in that the Confederate ships had trouble reading signals from each other through the thick clouds of funnel and gun smoke, and left her alone.

With her damage to her one remaining gun repaired enough for it to be used, *Monitor* re-joined the action and both she and *Virginia* manoeuvred around each other, trading shots. *Virginia*'s gunfire was more effective and the Union ironclad was hit and damaged again, left drifting, but still with only one gun still in action. By now, *St Lawrence* was reaching the action and was able to pour a broadside into the smaller *Jamestown*, severely damaging her. The Confederate gunboat, *Teazer*, which had also raised steam and sailed from the Elizabeth River, now joined the action, being struck and fouled by the drifting *Monitor*. When the *Patrick Henry*, which had also steamed into action, joined in and began pouring well aimed shot into the disabled and drifting *Monitor*, the Union captain, Lieutenant Greene, felt he had no other option but to scuttle his ship to avoid her being captured, his crew being rescued from the river by the Confederates.

The two remaining Union warships, *Vanderbilt* and *St Lawrence*, now turned and headed towards the cover of the batteries at Newport News. *Vanderbilt* managed to cross the Middle Ground Shoals without grounding, but *St Lawrence* was not so lucky, and stuck fast. With the four Rebel ships closing to engage the hapless cripple, her captain struck his colours and surrendered. (The ship was later stripped of anything useful and burnt by the Confederates as they could not move her off the Shoals and did not want her re-taken by the Federal forces.)

The Confederate forces sailed back to the Elizabeth River and anchored. The crew of *Jamestown* set about again repairing their damaged ship, but there was no sign of further movement from the Union ships. The action was essentially over, an apparent Confederate victory. They had sunk their enemy's newest ironclad as well as one of their large steam frigates, and left a second one damaged, as well as burning a third frigate. In return, they had lost one of their gunboats, whilst three others had suffered damage, all of which was repaired by the crews. The larger, Union steam and sail powered frigates were obviously unsuitable for fighting in these confined waters and until the Union Navy could come up with another ironclad or a different solution, the Confederate forces had naval superiority on the river. Faced with a threat to his naval supply routes and communications, General McClellan abandoned his advance on Richmond and began retracing his steps down the James Peninsula. The capital of the Confederacy was safe.



Several 19th Century anchors have been recovered during dredging operations. Presumably they will find their way to the RN Museum in the Heritage Area of HER MAJESTY'S NAVAL BASE PORTSMOUTH. In passing, I hope those 3,300 tonnes of steel are good solid British Steel tonnes from the Welsh steel works at Port Talbot, not cheap subsidised Chinese steel imports.



HMS PROTECTOR in the Antarctic. (Picture Crown Copyright)
The following is an abridged article from the excellent “Navy News”.

Protector honours tragic Antarctic heroes in first visit to Capt. Scott’s base in 80 years.

For the first time in 80 years a Royal Navy warship has paid its respects to legendary explorer Capt. Robert Falcon Scott RN at the base where he began his ill-fated attempt to reach the South Pole.

Sailors and Royal Marines from survey ship HMS Protector held a service of remembrance at ‘Scott’s Hut’ – a wooden shack on the shores of the Ross Sea from where the naval officer and his band of explorers set out on foot, pulling sledges, in an attempt to be the first men to reach the South Pole, more than 850 miles away. They were beaten to the most southerly point on the planet by Norwegians led by Roald Amundsen and, plagued by bad weather on the return from the pole, died, beaten by the cold, hunger and exhaustion.



Untouched by generations, the inside of Scott's Hut – pretty much as it was a century ago

The bodies of Scott and two comrades were discovered in their tent, the following summer, not far from safety. Scott's diary revealed the horror of their journey back from the Pole and the heroism of Capt. Oats who sacrificed himself in an effort to save the others.

The hut – 50ft long and 25ft wide – was home to two dozen men who were cooped up in it day and night during the Antarctic winter. After being abandoned for good in 1917, the building has been left alone for the past century apart from attempts to clear snow and ice.

Protector's sailors found fur boots and skis lying where they had been left, the wooden bunks still fitted with sleeping bags and clothes were hung over stoves, as if drying in the warmth.

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The following is from Rob Morgan.

The November issue of 'Mariner's Mirror'(Vol 101:4) contains as usual some fascinating articles for the naval war gamer. One small note I picked up, in the 'Society Records' pages refers to a presentation by Professor Tweddle of the RN Museums. He explains that the IWM has handed over a number of items for housing at Portsmouth, including 'a tank landing craft which had been present at D-Day, had been at the bottom of Birkenhead Docks'. M33, and HMS Caroline have both received a lot of media attention, but the LCT is a new one on me! I've written to Professor Tweddle, but in the meantime, does anyone know more about this vessel, or of lifting it from the bottom of Birkenhead Docks?



The lead article in the same issue of the 'Mirror' has some potential for a wargame. 'The Navalization of Ireland' (pp388-410) deals with the Royal Navy's role in countering Irish insurrection in the 1840's. Written by Jerome Devitt, it describes the pivotal role of scores of small vessels-pinnaces, barges and the odd steamer in patrolling both the long Shannon river, and some thirty larger warships and auxiliaries based in the ports around the coast from Kilybegs to Dublin.

An unusual piece, dealing with the RN in a place and a period not often considered by historians, the potential for a riverine action or one of the sort experienced by Federal patrollers in the ACW is obvious. In its own right well worth reading.



(Shoho at Yokosuka 22 December 1941 - Colorized picture by Irootoko Jr.)  
from [www.combinedfleet.com](http://www.combinedfleet.com)

**Many WWII aircraft carriers started out on the slipway as other types of ships before changing doctrines or requirements of Naval Treaties limiting surface fleet numbers came into force. What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other word would smell as sweet.**

**Soryu = Blue Dragon; Hiryu = Flying Dragon**

**Shoho = Happy Phoenix. (Originally laid down as submarine support ship,  
Tsurugizaki**

**Zuiho = Auspicious Phoenix. (Originally laid down as submarine support ship,  
Takasaki**

**Kaga = Increased Joy**

**Akagi = Red Castle**

**Shokaku = Soaring Crane**

**Zuikaku = Auspicious Crane**



Axis and Allies HMS AJAX with the Topside Minis Ajax for comparison. I'm seeing many good comments about Topside Minis on the web. Further to Andy Field's comments in December's AGB, see <http://hobbygamesrecce.blogspot.co.uk/2015/12/the-quest-for-naval-minis.html> by Peter Schweighofer for example. The Topside Minis website includes free miniature rules for download.

## JUTLAND 100 UPDATE

First of all, the good news. We are go for Jutland 100 on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2016! I would like to thank everybody who has volunteered so far as we have been able to show to the Museum that we can commit to this date.

OK, what next?

1. **Players and Other Volunteers.** I am still looking for as many volunteers to help play the game and engage with the public etc. I am also looking for volunteers to help with the playtesting, including from those not able to attend the event itself.
2. **Ships.** We have committed to playing at either 1/3000<sup>th</sup> or 1/2400<sup>th</sup> scale and we can provide the ships at these scales. The Museum is still interested in if we can do the game at 1/1250<sup>th</sup>. A number of individuals have said they can provide some ships but to do this properly we need every ship, including all 100 plus destroyers. I would be most grateful if people can provide 1/1250<sup>th</sup> vessels then they let me know what they are willing to contribute so I can take a judgement on which scale we will commit to,
3. **Rules and Playtesting.** My first go at doing the rules has been round and thank you very much for the contributions which will make the event go more smoothly. We will be using General Quarters 2 with some limited modifications, some of which will speed up play, some will add a bit of complication to try and capture the command and control issues that the admirals fought with. Players will need to be willing to lose their traditional "gods eye" view in the interest of making the battle more believable. The Museum is keen that these challenges are borne out in our game. I would now like to see them play tested to ensure they survive contact with reality. I can lead a

group and I am willing to travel 90 minutes from the Worcester area. This is also an opportunity for those who want to get involved in the event but can't make the day itself.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Stuart Machin at [stuart.machin@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:stuart.machin@hotmail.co.uk).

### **SIGNAL PAD!**

#### Ship Model Shows UK 2016

Sunday 13th March: Theale village hall near Reading, Berks. 10am - 3pm.

Saturday 9th April: South West Ship Show, Parish Wharf Leisure Centre, Portishead, Bristol, BS20 7DD. 10am-3.30pm

Saturday 11th June: Scottish Ship Show, Hall 2, Meadowbank Centre, London Road, Edinburgh, EH7 6AE. 10am-3.30pm

Sunday 17th July: Theale village hall near Reading, Berks. 10am-3pm

Saturday 10th September: South East Ship Show, St George's Centre, Pembroke Road, Chatham, Kent, ME4 4UH. 10am-3.30pm.

Saturday 1st October: North West Ship Show, Old Christ Church, Waterloo Road, Liverpool, L32 1RE. 10am-3.30pm

Sunday 9th October: Theale village hall near Reading, Berks. 10am- 3pm

If you love ships, then these shows are for you. Models, books, memorabilia, preserved ship societies etc.

If we'd like to put on a game at any of these venues then please contact your chairman on 01271 866637 or [stuart\\_barnes\\_watson@hotmail.com](mailto:stuart_barnes_watson@hotmail.com). Tables free. A chance to highlight naval wargames, recruit new members and have a fun day out. I will be present at all as Anchorage Models and look forward to meeting more of our members.

Stuart Barnes-Watson  
Chairman

David Manley is organising the Naval Wargames Weekend at Explosion on July 2/3<sup>rd</sup> this year. Thanks to those of you who have responded with offers of games so far. The programme is coming together, so if you'd like to run something here please let David know the usual details:

Subject

Table Size

Saturday, Sunday or both?

Any special requirements, notes etc.

Don't forget to check out [www.newarkirregulars.org.uk](http://www.newarkirregulars.org.uk) for a wargames show or convention near you. The sections are, UK and Ireland, Europe, USA and Canada, Australia, South East Asia and Africa. So unless you are on the space station or visiting Scott's Hut; they have got you covered.

Coming in March's AGB: Odd Eastern Encounters At Sea, The Navy and the Napoleonic Wars, CSS DAVID plus lots more.

## **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).

Membership secretary: [simonjohnstokes@aol.com](mailto:simonjohnstokes@aol.com)

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## **NWS Events and Regional Contacts, 2014**

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

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Tel: 01324 714248

*e-mail:* [kenny.thomson@hotmail.com](mailto:kenny.thomson@hotmail.com) - *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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### **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