



All Guns Blazing!

Newsletter of the Naval Wargames Society

No. 259 – MAY 2016

EDITORIAL

The Jutland playtest went well. Winter had its last hurrah and I had to contend with a blizzard and below freezing temperature on the drive there. The snow in the trees and on the hill tops was picturesque; the hall was warm and a good size. We were so busy we did not have time to visit the village pub along the lane. Useful lessons were learned so the day itself on 31st May should have fewer problems than it might have had. Glossing over my tactical ineptitude which had a Battle Cruiser pincer movement pincering nothing but open sea, we were trying out a system where the fleet commander's orders were interpreted and actioned by a different person to simulate the fog of war and the difficulty of sending signals and their correct receipt in the heat of battle. General Quarters was the rule set which is not an over complicated set to begin with and we had a few ideas on what could be cut out to ensure that the refight is interesting to the public from the start. The drive home was in the sunshine and warmth of a normal spring day. No wonder the British like talking about the weather so much when it is so interesting.

Somewhere in the World, the Sun is over the yardarm.

Norman Bell

JUTLAND 100 UPDATE

First of all, the good news. We are go for Jutland 100 on 31st May 2016! I would like to thank everybody who has volunteered to help on the day.

OK, what next?

1. **Players and Other Volunteers.** There is still time to volunteer to help play the game and engage with the public etc.
2. **Rules and Playtesting.** The rules has been tinkered with following the playtest, which will make the event go more smoothly. We will be using General Quarters 2 with limited modifications, which will speed up play 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. There is still an opportunity for those who want to get involved in the event.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Stuart Machin at stuart.machin@hotmail.co.uk.

Thanks to Rob Morgan for the Quiz each month.

ANSWERS TO SEA QUIZ 51

Straight forward this time, eh?

1. She was a Bulgarian gunboat.
2. They were HMS's Inflexible and Monarch.
3. It was the Armstrong Breech Loader.
4. Admirals Forbes, Tovey, Fraser and Moore.
5. HMS Devastation was never a Flagship.

SEA QUIZ 52...Sea Slang!

The pages of *'The Navy'* could be utterly nostalgic as far as the Royal Navy was concerned, and one substantial quiz from the late 1940's dealt with the slang, not all lower deck, which developed in the fleet over the twentieth century, and often before that. The 'Sea Slang' quiz material brought a torrent of responses, memories and tangential references, some (apparently) unprintable.

1. Which ship was known as "Am and Tripe"?
2. Which was *'The Arch Deacon'*?
3. And which *'Big Lizzie'*?
4. *'Corn-Curer'* was which warship?
5. And which *'Jam Jug'*?

An extract from:-

The Battle of the Skagerrak (Jutland)

by Commander Georg von Hase

First Gunnery Officer of the Derfflinger.

"Now hit after hit shook the ship. The enemy had got our range excellently. I felt a clutch at my heart when I thought of what the conditions must be in the interior of the ship. So far we in the armoured tower had come off very well . . . my train of thought was sharply interrupted. Suddenly, we seemed to hear the

crack of doom. A terrific roar, a tremendous explosion and then darkness, in which we felt a colossal blow. The whole conning tower seemed to be hurled into the air as though by the hands of some portentous giant, and then to flutter trembling into its former position. A heavy shell had struck the fore-control about 50 cm. in front of me. The shell exploded, but failed to pierce the thick armour, which it had struck at an unfavourable angle, though huge pieces had been torn out. Poisonous greenish-yellow gases poured through the apertures into our control.”

(Ed note: I’m just glad that I was not there.)

Legendary during her brief wartime career, Ark Royal heralded a new era in aircraft carrier design, possessing tremendous hull rigidity and a formidable array of defensive armament. Apart from her key role in Force H in the Mediterranean and the North Atlantic, Ark Royal also took part in operations off Norway in company with HMS Glorious. It was one of her Blackburn Skuas that claimed the first aerial victory of WWII against a German aircraft on 26th September 1939 and one of her Fairey Swordfish that crippled the mighty Bismarck, leading to the German capital ship's destruction at the hands of the Royal Navy. On 13th November 1941, Ark Royal was torpedoed by U-81 off Gibraltar, her severe list causing flooding to choke her boilers, bringing her to a standstill. Her crew were taken off and the mighty Ark continued to list until she eventually capsized and sank.



**Secretary Mabus
Names Next
Destroyer Carl
M. Levin.**

"The Russian Naval Uniform 1696-1917" By V. D. Dotsenko. Published by 'LOGOS', St.Petersburg.1994 (Reprint).ISBN 5-87288-023-5.Price stated to be \$50US, but no Rouble price is indicated in the book.
Reviewed by Rob Morgan.

To describe this excellent 250 page volume as comprehensive would be something of an understatement, though I suspect that it's availability in the UK and Western Europe is likely to remain very limited. It is still in print in Russia and on sale in the Independent States however, and is regarded as one of the standard contemporary works on this complex subject.

The book contains at an estimate some 500 excellent quality colour plates, line drawings, photographs (none of these, incidentally, are the commonly known few from other publications), and tables and portraits. Each with an English language title, which can be easily read, though in each case shorter than the Russian description of course.

The Author's preface is also translated into English, and he correctly says that in three centuries of Russian naval history no-one had managed to publish a work dealing with the subject. This volume at 250 pages is a more than adequate start, but compared with Viskovatov's almost legendary *'Historical Description of the Uniform and Armament of the Russian Army; Compiled on Imperial Command'* which runs to 30 Volumes, the naval subject may yet have a deal more to offer. Cap tallies, standards, banners and flags, sidearms, edged weapons and rifles are among those aspects not adequately dealt with here, but that's not a criticism by any means!

A fair proportion of the book deals with the intense Imperial efforts at naval expansion in the 19th century, until a brief foray into the final desperate years of the Tsar's fleets, which I found equally interesting. Five chapters deal with the Navy after 1815, entitled respectively *'Is the Navy necessary to Russia?', 'The Navy again on the rise', 'The Navy becomes Iron-Clad', 'In the Corridors of The Sovereign Power'* and poignantly ends with *'In the Time of Troubles'*. Four appendices deal with ranks and duties, rules of wearing orders and decorations, there's a glossary and a 26 page chronological table of the evolution of Russian naval uniform for all ranks from 1696-1917, this chronology is in English and is well translated and very valuable as a source. The bibliography is short, as Dotsenko's opening remarks suggest it would be, but includes several mid-19th century volumes I've never heard of previously, and the single publication made in 'Soviet times'-that was as late as 1988.

There is sufficient information and full colour detail provided to re-create for example landing parties-officers, petty officers, and seamen from Guards crews and

ships companies during the 1860's to the 1890's afloat and ashore. Remarkably little changed in the landing rig of a Matross from 1881 to the 'rip-off all epaulettes' rule of the Provisional Government, and the earlier men can be easily modelled using say 'Peter Pig's' Range 16 WWI packs 54,55,56, and 57 in 15mm scale-with a Peter Laing A606 Gatling gun as additional firepower.

The role of the naval gun crews and shore companies in the Crimean War is well explored here, and I was particularly interested to note that a specific cap and badge existed in 1855 for '*Officers of Prisoner Companies*'. Even the uniform emblems of the 'Russian-American Company' in 1851 are touched upon, though I should have liked much greater information on this subject.

This book is very good indeed, and deserves to reach the widest possible audience.

Rob Morgan.

Looking at '*The Artilleryman*'.

This is now edited by Jack Melton Junior, based in Georgia, and the website's at.....ArtillerymanMagazine.com, and e-mail at....mail@artillerymanmagazine.com

The Winter 2015 edition, (priced \$5.95 US) 50 pages of full colour and eight substantial articles, seven of which are ACW ordnance related. The two highly technical pieces on shells and fuzes aside, there's a useful, and clearly with wargame potential- and maps- article on the Confederate Forts Wagner and Gregg, and Batteries on Morris Island in 1863, these defences seem to provide a sound ship v shore game using Federal Monitors and Ironclads (USS's New Ironsides, Catskill, Montauk, Weehawken and Patapsco were all involved in bombarding in July 1863- but most ships suffered significant damage) against fixed powerful batteries of Confederate heavy guns.

The guns of the lost Confederate Gunboat *CSS Pee Dee*, and their retrieval from a river bed in South Carolina are given sound treatment, the vessel itself being well described, with its few late-war actions and I think this was one of the handful of 'Maury' types launched (both Peter Pig and Thoroughbred make 1/600th models, and Navwar/Skytrex a 1/1200th), and seems to have been rather well armed; the little vessel certainly saw limited active service. Interesting to learn that at the CSN Navy Yard at Florence also built two 60' torpedo boats,'Davids' I wondered? Sadly the seriously ordnance themed journal doesn't provide an illustration or line drawing of the *Pee Dee*, but you can't have everything!

Rob Morgan

The price of freedom is eternal vigilance and billions of tax dollars. The UK will continue to meet NATO's target to spend 2% of GDP on defence for the rest of the decade. 1st April 2016 marked the first day that these commitments come into effect with the core defence budget increasing by £800m from the 2015/16 baseline of £34.3bn to £35.1bn. In addition, the MOD will receive £2.1bn from the Joint Security Fund by the end of this Parliament. This means the Defence budget will increase by nearly £5bn to £39.7bn in 2020/21.

Even with the increases the Royal Navy is but a shadow of its former self. Rumours are rife about the number of vessels going into reserve reducing yet again the number of surface vessels; savings are necessary to provide funding and manpower for HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH and the press semi regularly has stories about the quality and reliability of RN Ships. Obviously Ships and manpower do not come cheap but I hope that some unforeseen circumstances in the near future do not prove embarrassing to the RN and the UK.



The first Queen Elizabeth Class Aircraft Carrier will be ready before the aircraft are. The F35 Lightning II is scheduled to be displayed in the UK this summer.

A Chinese military aircraft has for the first time publicly landed at a new airport on an island China has built in the disputed South China Sea, raising the prospect that China could base fighter jets there. The United States has criticized China's construction of artificial islands in the South China Sea and worries that it plans to use them for military purposes, even though China says it has no

hostile intent. This is one area of the World that provides gamers with, "what if" near future possibilities.

When designing naval games for encounters on the open sea do you have measuring to determine movement and range or hexagon/brick grid to move your ships? If you choose a hex system there are still scale and time decisions to be made. Hex/grid marked playing areas are common if the game is one that comes in a box.

Game	Hex diameter	Turn length
Flat Top (Avalon Hill)	20 miles	1 hour
Indian Ocean Adventure (GDW)	33 nm	6 hours
Solomon Sea (Simulations Workshop)	100 nm	3.5 hours
White Ensign/Rising Sun (MiH)	55 nm	8 hours
Carrier Battles (Rising Sun Simulations)	13.5 nm	1 hour
Carrier Battles Basic Game	54 nm	4 hours
Carrier Strike (3W)	80 nm	4 hours
Midway (AH '65)	50 nm	2 hours
Scratch One Flat Top (3W)	40 nm	2 hours
Smithsonian Guadalcanal (Avalon Hill)	70 nm	4 hours
Victory at Midway (XTR)	100 nm	3.5 hours

The above Game comparisons were compiled by Markus Stumptner in 2001.

16th April 2016. HMS MERSEY, HMCS SUMMERSIDE and US Coast Guard Cutter THETIS operating in the Atlantic, intercepted a Honduras-bound yacht off the coast of Nicaragua. Three suspects and 16 bales of cocaine, value estimated at £12 Million, were passed to US law enforcement officials aboard the US Coast Guard Cutter, THETIS.

<https://vimeo.com/162655850>

This Battle of Jutland video was brought to my attention by Andy Field. Check it out.

Welcome to new member, Paul Grace. Now if only my emails were not bounced back as undeliverable. Technology – what's not to like.



HMS SOMERSET Type 23 Duke Class Frigate, escorts the Russian Udaloy Class Destroyer Vice Admiral Kulakov through the English Channel on her way back to Russia from Syria. The Destroyer and accompanying tug and tanker temporarily berthed in the Moray Firth to avoid the worst of a Storm. Russian Warships of the Baltic and Northern Fleets routinely passage through UK waters en-route to the Mediterranean and Persian Gulf regions.



Lt Cdr Ian Shropshall RN, a would-be submarine commander manoeuvres the Dutch Submarine BRUINVIS in the narrow waters of the Norwegian Fjords seeking out and then avoiding the Dutch Frigate VAN AMSTEL. The fearsome “Perisher” Course. Failure means an end to a career in the Silent Service.

The Royal Navy’s submarine flotilla is all nuclear powered. Not so the Norwegians and Dutch who run traditional diesel engines and frequently host would-be British and American boat drivers as part of their instruction.

HNLMS BRUINVIS (Dutch for porpoise) is about one third the size of the Astute Class or half the size of the older Trafalgar Class Hunter Killer; therefore better suited to operating in the confined waters of the Fjords. The Perisher Course tests mental arithmetic and three dimensional spatial awareness. Lt Cdr Shropshall had to locate the VAN AMSTEL and the patrol ship GRONINGEN and then evade the fast moving warships as they aggressively hunted him down.

I have been looking at air warfare rules recently to see how they handle and recreate the third dimension on the table top. Can any pointers be found to assist the re-creation of a submarine hunt on the two dimensions of the game table? Perhaps you know of an existing rule set or game? If so, drop me a line for inclusion in a future AGB. A longer article would be suitable for the next edition of “Battlefleet” and therefore send it to Stuart Fieldhouse.

fintactica@googlemail.com

Norman Bell.

The Royal Navy has fired a warning shot at a Spanish patrol boat as it tried to 'hassle' a US nuclear submarine attempting to dock at Gibraltar.

Spanish Guardia Civil vessel Rio Cedena twice tried to disrupt the visit by ballistic missile sub USS Florida as it was approaching the British Overseas Territory on the southern tip of Spain. Flares were fired across its bow as it sailed in front of the American submarine and the Royal Navy reportedly dispatched its squadron patrol vessel HMS Sabre.

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3574622/Royal-Navy-fires-warning-shot-Spanish-patrol-boat-hassling-nuclear-submarine-attempting-dock-Gibraltar.html#ixzz47mzB9n7x>

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‘A Bumper issue for wargamers!’

A Review Note by Rob Morgan.

No, not our own dear ‘Battlefleet’, but remarkably *‘The Mariner’s Mirror’ Vol: 102, No.2* for May 2016. No fewer than three of the four main articles has some value for the wargamer at sea.

First an ‘ancient’ galley warfare article on Caesar’s crossing of the Adriatic during the Roman Civil War by Ian Longhurst. Brilliant! Using contemporary texts a narrative of the entire naval campaign gives ample opportunity for constructing a decent table top venture, including weather points! Some good references too. Secondly *‘From Galleys to Square Riggers’* by Aldo Antonicelli provides a lengthy and useful account of the transformation and modernization of the Sardinian fleet in the 1700’s and early 1800’s. The Kingdom of Sardinia was one of the last galley

fleets in the Mediterranean, not acquiring square rigged warships unto 1763. It was to become a British-officered sailing navy but one with significant operational problems in its wars against the Barbary Corsairs. Not until Genoa was incorporated into the Kingdom in 1815 was a real, effective sailing fleet sustainable. This is a very sound tale of the creation of a new navy, and gives plenty of scope for modelling and for small scale naval encounters. Thoroughly enjoyable.

Third, a shorter piece by Augusto Salgado on '*British Aid to Portugal during the First World War*' and provides a most interesting other campaign for the Great War. It reads well, providing information probably new to most NWS members on the efforts to counter mine and submarine warfare off the coasts of Portugal and the Azores and Madeira, crucial areas for convoy work. The details of RN escorts to Portuguese troop convoys and coastal defence of the country are well described, and there was French involvement too. More than one 'different' wargame in this article, I suspect.

The fourth article concerns Jackie Fisher and Winston at the Admiralty, but further on, in the shorter 'Notes' which always appear in the '*Mariner's Mirror*' between pages 211 and 217, you'll find an account by Toby Ewin of the action between Russian and Turkish (German) fleets of Cape Sarych near Trebizond in the Black Sea in 1914. The account is by Rear Admiral George Le Page, then an Engineer Sub Lt, and provides a blow by blow report of a substantial naval encounter, which would provide a foil for any attempt to wargame the escape of *Goeben* and her consort, which of course cost Troubridge dear. So wargamable it's hard to believe, and yet I don't ever recall it being mentioned yet alone played. Very interesting, and Ewin's English language Bibliography is another interesting addition to the wargamer's arsenal.

Don't miss this issue!

Rob Morgan.

May 2016.

SIGNAL PAD!

Saturday/Sunday 2nd and 3rd July at Explosion Museum, Gosport, Hampshire.

The Naval Wargames weekend is taking shape. Weather permitting the Battle of the River Plate will be outside! Indoors will be Napoleonics (Inshore Squadron's impressive models), pre-dreadnoughts in the Med and "Smoke on the Heavy Water" 1/700 WWII Norwegian. There is still time to put on a game on the Saturday or Sunday or both days. Contact David Manley to say what size table you would like. Well done to David and all those that have already booked their spot.

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.

Membership secretary: simonjohnstokes@aol.com

NWS Events and Regional Contacts, 2014

NWS Northern Fleet – Falkirk East Central Scotland

Kenny Thomson, 12 Craigs Way, Rumford Grange, Rumford, Stirlingshire, FK2 0EU

Tel: 01324 714248

e-mail: kenny.thomson@hotmail.com - *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)
-
-

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

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