



All Guns Blazing!

Newsletter of the Naval Wargames Society

No. 267 – January 2017

EDITORIAL

Another year and I hope it is a good one. Perhaps we can make a better effort this time to keep our New Year Resolutions. Perhaps one of those Resolutions could be to play a few more wargames than we did in 2016.

Welcome to new members Peter James, Scott Calzia and Norman Conway.

Cheers

Norman Bell

PEARL HARBOR (NNS) -- Aircraft carrier USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74) pulled into Pearl Harbor, Dec. 2, to participate in National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day events in Hawaii.

Dec. 7, 2016, marked the 75th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor and Oahu, which precipitated the United States' entry into World War II. The theme of the commemoration, "Honoring the Past, Inspiring the Future," was highlighted through events that continued through Dec. 11.

For more news on John C. Stennis, visit www.stennis.navy.mil or follow along on Facebook at www.facebook.com/stennis74.

HMNZS OTAGO served as the flagship as the New Zealand Navy celebrated its 75th birthday

The frigate served as flagship for a fleet review in Auckland Harbour as the country's Governor General Dame Patsy Reddy took the salute from eight New Zealand and international warships – from China, Australia, Korea and Japan, Indonesia and India.

The two-hour-long sail past, during which the Otago was accompanied by a waka – Maori war canoe – was the high point of six weeks of celebrations and commemorations, codenamed Operation Neptune after the cruiser largely crewed by Kiwis which was lost with all but one hand in the Mediterranean in December 1941.

Given commitments elsewhere, the RN was unable to provide a vessel for the review, (Editor's note: that's a sign of the times) but the Royal Marines Band Portsmouth made the 23,000-mile round trip to perform at various events.



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Survey vessel HMS ENTERPRISE has saved more than 9,000 lives while operating in the Mediterranean.

UK Armed Forces Minister Mike Penning praised the Royal Navy vessel for her contribution to Operation Sophia, which is focused on tackling human smugglers and arms traffickers who endanger the lives of migrants seeking travel to Europe.

Of around 30,000 migrants rescued during the operation to date, Enterprise has saved over 9,000, as well as denting the activity of criminal gangs. She will now hand over responsibilities to sister ship HMS ECHO.

The following is an extract from the First Sea Lord's Christmas message to the Royal Navy:

“Reading the news you'd be forgiven for thinking that the Royal Navy had packed up and gone home, leaving Britain undefended. The reality is altogether different, and should be judged by action not by commentary. As First Sea Lord, I owe it to our sailors and marines, many of whom are preparing to spend Christmas away from their loved ones, to ensure the country recognises how hard they are working for our island nation. Today, the Royal Navy has 30 ships and submarines, and over 8000 of our young men and women - regular, reserve and civilian - committed to operations at home and around the world. The Royal Navy continues to fulfil our standing commitments, from supporting British overseas territories in the Caribbean and the Falklands to the Royal Marines' on-going support to counter-terrorism at home. A ballistic missile submarine is currently on patrol deterring state based threats against the UK and our NATO allies, as has been the case 24 hours a day, every day, for the last 47 years. In Northern Europe and the Baltic, we are responding to the highest level of Russian naval activity since the end of the Cold War. In the Mediterranean and the Aegean, we continue to work alongside our European partners to counter arms-traffickers and people smugglers, and to stem the flow of migrants. Meanwhile in the Gulf we are working to protect international shipping in a region which is essential to the UK's economic security. Sadly the world is less certain and less safe. But

our sense of responsibility has not changed. The Royal Navy may be smaller than in the past but has a strong future so this is no time to talk the Navy down”.



Type 45 Destroyer.

Unseaworthy boats overloaded with men, women and children risk a Mediterranean crossing on a daily basis. No one knows how many don't make it.



7th DECEMBER 2016. HMS ILLUSTRIOUS LEAVES HMNB PORTSMOUTH FOR THE LAST TIME.



Photograph from The Times' newspaper website.

Hundreds watched in quiet reflection as the ship was towed out of Portsmouth on her final journey to the Turkish scrap yard. Many downed a tot of rum as a salute.

Alan Vowles, who served on the ship, said: "I had the pleasure of serving on Lusty from 1984 to 1987. One of the proudest moments of my life has to be lining the deck as we sailed into Sydney harbour in a fleet of warships to celebrate the Australian Navy's 75th birthday".

Rushed into service in 1982, HMS ILLUSTRIOUS sailed over 900,000 miles, enforcing no fly zones over Bosnia and in the Gulf in the 1990s. She supported operations in Afghanistan at the start of the current century. One of her last missions was disaster relief in the Philippines after a hurricane. She was the fifth Ship to bear the name and second Aircraft Carrier. The previous Carrier saw service in the Second World War, notably at Taranto.

Editor's Note: See AGB August 2014 for a few words on ILLUSTRIOUS's final arrival at HMNB PORTSMOUTH.



HMS SUTHERLAND says hello as a Russian Ship passes through the English Channel on its way home from Syria. Picture from the Daily Mail website.

 VICE ADMIRAL KULAKOV	 HMS SUTHERLAND
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Udaloy class destroyer ■ Part of Russian northern fleet based at Severomorsk on the Kola Peninsula near Murmansk ■ Main mission is hunting enemy submarines ■ Armed with anti-ship cruise missiles, torpedoes and anti-aircraft weapons ■ Was retired for repairs in 1991 and only returned to service 18 years later 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Two helicopters – one for search and rescue and one for locating enemy subs Length: 530ft Crew: 220 Weights: 7,480 tons Maximum speed: 55 kph (29.5knots) Launched: 1980 Current task: Ship is returning from operations in Eastern Med Commanding officer: Captain 1st Grade Stanislav Varik
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Type 23 Duke-class frigate ■ Based at Devonport naval base ■ Main mission was initially to deal with Soviet submarine threat ■ Armed with the Harpoon, a missile system with a range of 80 miles ■ MK8 gun can fire 24 high explosive shells per minute at targets miles away ■ Seawolf guided missile can track and destroy a fast – moving target the size of a cricket ball 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Merlin Mk2 helicopter on board to find and track submarines that may try to enter UK waters Length: 437ft Crew: 180 Weights: 4,900 tons Maximum speed: 63kph (34knots) Launched: 1996 Current tasking: Ship is carrying out escort duties close to UK shores Commanding officer: Commander Trish Kohn – currently only woman commander of a UK warship

The guided-missile destroyer USS Zumwalt (DDG 1000) arrives at its new homeport in San Diego. Zumwalt, the US Navy's most technologically advanced surface ship, will now begin installation of combat systems, testing and evaluation and operation integration with the fleet. U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Emiline L. M. Senn (Released) 161208-N-OR184-0044



The pilot of the Fairey Swordfish credited with dropping the torpedo that damaged the rudder of the BISMARCK has died in Perthshire aged 97. Commander John “Jock” Moffat was in a wood and canvas biplane up against the world’s most powerful Battleship. Skimming the waves, the navigator leaning out of the open cockpit, backside up in the air. “Not now, not now!” into the voice pipe. Then, “Let it go” and the torpedo was away into a trough, not a wave crest which would have deflected it off to who knows where.





Thinking that the attack had been totally unsuccessful, the Swordfish crews took off again the next day to try again. Fortunately for them, the KGV and RODNEY made an attack by the 143mph Swordfish not necessary.



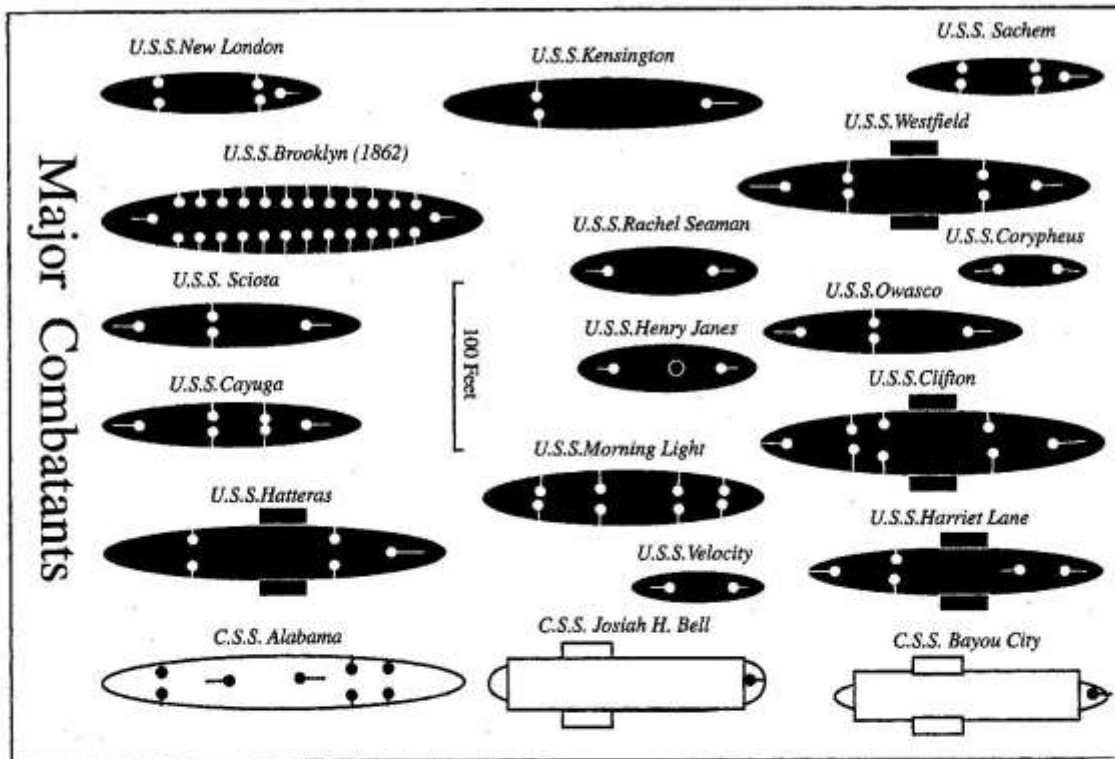
Photo by Rob Morgan. It is the Confederate Cottonclad CSS GENERAL BRAGG, a “Peter Pig” model, number 24 in the “Hammerin’ Iron” range, priced approx £4.50.

"Cottonclads!"

My friend Mike Crane of Texarcana sent me a copy of *'Cottonclads! The Battle of Galveston and the Defense of the Texas Coast'*, by Donald S. Frazier, published in 1998 by McWhiney Foundation Press in the USA, at \$11.95. A 144 page paperback, well mapped and illustrated, the book deals with a combined operations campaign which has so much to offer the ACW naval wargamer...almost all of the vessels involved are easily assembled using 'Peter Pig', 'Thoroughbred' and 'Bay Area Yards' models in 1/600th, or the products of the numerous manufacturers around in 1/1200th. I prefer 1/600th because the 'Pig' range has a decent shore range of infantry, cavalry of heavy and light guns, supplies and buildings, etc for sharpshooting and ambush purposes, all very useful and reasonably priced, if you game the ship to shore aspects of the battles.

In 1862, Admiral Farragut moved against Galveston and several other Texan ports, Galveston was captured. Unsupported, the Union fleet's shore parties suffered setbacks and ultimately defeat before they could be reached by the Army, particularly when McGruder's Confederate force of 'Cottonclads' were sent to attack the Yankee warships, ably supported by their artillery and sharpshooters ashore. This counterattack led to heavy Federal losses, four warships and three support vessels, and the re-taking of Galveston, which remained a crucial Confederate blockade runner port until the war's end.

A readable and tremendously useful book, it deals with several of the encounters which might make sound table top games. The Battle of Sabine Pass, and the action off Galveston on New Year's Day 1863 for example- all well mapped including the shoal waters and sandbanks which proved problematic. While there's a very good diagram provided of a subsidiary encounter between two Union gunboats and a host of Texan shore gunners and infantry at Kuhn's Wharf...now that would make an interesting game. The sinking of *USS Hatteras*, the capture of *USS Harriet Lane* and the remarkable taking of three Union supply vessels in a lengthy chase can all make for short and effective games.



As well as illustrating 'how dangerous a place Texas could be for the Federal ships', as the cover notes say, the book includes a most unusual feature- one just made for the naval wargamer. On page 44, there's a plan of each of the major naval vessels involved in this distant conflict, some twenty of them in all, and to printed to a decent wargame scale. The gun positions on each ship are shown, and the armament and ship details are provided for each in Appendix C of the book. By copying the page onto card, even the non- tinclad naval person can create these battles with little effort, and they can be used elsewhere on the rivers and coasts of the Confederacy, of course. There are two side on views of Confederate 'Cottonclads' As well, which could also be turned into 'flats' for a table top action.

An excellent book, filled with ideas and interest, dealing with a campaign the Confederacy won through competent defensive action.

Rob Morgan.



Pearl Harbor under attack December 1941.

Japanese aeroplanes attacking Battleship Row. As seen from the southwest. [Ford Island](#) is in the centre of the picture, and Battleship Row is behind the island.

Well known Japanese photo freely available on the internet.

75 Years after the attack on Pearl Harbor and the battles across the Pacific in 1942, could be the time for a few war games re-creating actual events or, “what ifs”. Perhaps you can review a game for inclusion in AGB.

The veteran “Victory in the Pacific”, dates from 1977 by Avalon Hill and is an area war-game where the Japanese player has to sweep across the Pacific capturing Islands and controlling sea areas, accumulating victory points before the industrial might of the USA produces (overwhelming) reinforcements which should stem and then turn back the tide. Unsurprisingly Game Turn 1 is the attack on Pearl – the Japanese player has to decide how many waves of aircraft to send to inflict maximum damage before the defenders collect their wits and/or the American carriers show up and counter-strike.



Example Turn 1.

Two waves of Dive Bombers and Torpedo aircraft sweep in. The US Aircraft Carriers are not in port, so Battleship Row bears the full force of the attack. Nevada, Arizona and West Virginia shudder from several hits. Tennessee is hit and begins to settle on the harbor bottom. The Maryland is missed by the dive bombers. Nevada is hit again and begins to sink, two bombs hit Arizona and she blazes from stem to stern. West Virginia is hit again and begins to settle. A torpedo hits Tennessee, Oklahoma settles upright on the harbor bottom after the second wave. Maryland is hit and she also begins to settle on the bottom. Where are those Carriers? Are they any threat to the IJN? The Japanese decide to “go for it” and launch further strikes. The IJN is in luck; both the Enterprise and Hornet Task

Forces are alongside on the West Coast. The Lexington Task Force is in the Central Pacific near Midway and the Saratoga with insufficient escorts is near Hawaii and risks being an easy target if she can be found. More mayhem in Pearl Harbor; the Nevada and Arizona are blazing total wrecks, the West Virginia and Tennessee are hit again, very seriously damaged and bottomed. The Oklahoma is seriously damaged and on the bottom. The Maryland and Pennsylvania have damage. The IJN withdraw into the Pacific, flushed with success. Will the USN be able to recover before Game End Turn 8? Probably not but those Carriers are undamaged and will be overworked in the months ahead.

If the Aircraft Carriers had been in Pearl, they would normally berth on the other side of Ford Island to Battleship Row. The USN Enterprise however usually moored in Battleship Row. If the Enterprise had been moored between the California and the other battleships during the attack, she would have been impossible to miss. To get long enough low-altitude runs to their targets, the 24 Kate torpedo bombers that approached Battleship row had to fly through the narrow Southeast Loch. To hit most battleships, the Kates had to veer to the right when exiting the loch. To hit the California, they had to veer left. However, the photo below shows that the Southeast Loch pointed like an arrow almost directly at the normal berthing point of Enterprise.



Southeast Loch and Ford Island (National Archives 80-G-192874)



SIGNAL PAD!

Naval Wargames Weekend 2017

This event will be taking place in 2017 on the 8th & 9th of July from 10 am to 5 pm. The venue will be the same as usual, the Conference Room at Explosion! Museum in Gosport.

Unfortunately, this year the museum are not willing to host us for nothing so there will be an entry fee. This will be £5 for one day or £7.50 for both.

In return for this, not only do you get two days of naval wargaming, but free entry to the museum (normally £11). We are also planning, thanks to Nick Hewitt, to have a guided tour of the reserve collection (2 buildings not normally open to the public) on each afternoon.

Could anyone wishing/willing to put on a game for the weekend please send details (nature of game, space required, which day(s)) to Dave Sharp (no spaces) dave (underscore) sharp @ talktalk.net (dave_sharp@talktalk.net).

“MIDWAY” has been suggested as a major NWS effort! Can you help with the organisation in advance and participate on the day? Whatever happens I hope that the games are “participation” in nature as the weekend is the opportunity to get the public involved and perhaps signed up as new members.

UK Shows coming soon.

“CRUSADE 2017”. Saturday 28th January 2017. South Wales’ 22nd Annual Wargames show, at a new venue, St Cyres School, Sully Road, Penarth CF64 2TP. Adults £4, children £1.

“Overlord 2017”. Abingdon Wargames Club presents its 20th Annual show, Sunday 5th March 2017. Fitzharry’s School, Northcourt Road, Abingdon, Berkshire, OX14 1NP. £3 Adults, £1 children.

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, 2017

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)
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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

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