



All Guns Blazing!

Newsletter of the Naval Wargames Society

No. 269 – MARCH 2017

EDITORIAL

“Salute” is the next big wargames day in London.

We've now been confirmed a table at Salute 2017 (22nd April), looks like there's still going to be a couple of slots left for free entry into the show for NWS members so please drop me a line if you want to come along and help out running the game. The game, in keeping with the show theme this year of the Russian Revolution, is a river gunboat participation game based on actions that took place on the Dvina in North Russia in 1919.

Thanks

Simon Stokes

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Get there as a visitor or give Simon a hand if you can. Also do not forget about the Naval Wargames weekend at “Explosion” Museum in the summer.

There is just time to send any articles for the next edition of “Battlefleet” to Stuart Fieldhouse at fintactica@gmail.com The plan is to have the usual tip top standard “Battlefleet” available for possible new members to see at “Salute”.

Welcome to new NWS Members, Seg Giddings, Roger Sidwell and John Carlson. NWS continues slow but sure growth.

Cheers

Norman Bell

FORTUNE OF WAR. Mentioned in the Daily Telegraph newspaper and possibly others:- a giant French Flag, captured by one of Lord Nelson’s ships is to be put on display for the first time in 112 years. The 52ft by 27ft ensign, which is nearly the size of a tennis court, was captured when the French ship Le Genereux surrendered at the Battle of the Malta Convoy on Feb 18th 1800. Nelson and one of his captains, Sir Edward Berry, presented the trophy to the City of Norwich. It has been kept in storage since 1905 but will be on display this summer in the city’s castle.

A Couple of Cold War Soviet tugs.

'Tumbling Dice' make an RAF flying boat tender, single funnelled and neat (ISA 909) which has the look of a canal or harbour tug, which I suppose it is in some ways! Could be used for that purpose, towing barges rather than Sunderlands, and it has an 'international' feel to it, so could find a home on the Rhine or the Volga I suspect. Much smaller than the excellent 'Dice' HDML and GS Pinnace, it seems to have potential in smaller scale for much of the twentieth century.

In 1/1200th for instance with the stern transom filed to give a rounded appearance, and rudder trimmed off; then a pair of small ship's boats (taken say from an 'Airfix' 1/1200th 'HMS Cossack') mounted one each side of the funnel, it could serve as a Soviet 'Roslavl' Class tug, of which ten served into the 1980's. There's a decent overhead shot in Captain Moore's well known 'Warships of the Soviet Navy' on page 183.

Or by filing away the small box structure on top of the bridge and the smaller box forward of it, then drilling a hole for a 12mm pin mast at the forward edge of the main superstructure, gives you one of the numerous '530 Ton' Class built in Finland, purchased by the USSR in the fifties, and long in service. You'll find one of these on page 184.

Rob Morgan

The formation of the Royal Navy Submarine Service took place in 1901, an event which was closely followed on 20 March 1902 with the first dive of Holland 1.



She was lost in 1913 while under tow to the scrapyard following decommissioning. Recovered in 1982, she was put on display at the [Royal Navy Submarine Museum, Gosport](#).

Here is a reminder of the questions of Sea Quiz 58 and the answers.

1. In WWII which Allied navy was known as 'the curly navy'?
2. Where *exactly* was 'E-Boat Alley'?
3. In WWII, which group of ships were known as 'Mr.Middleton's Light Horse'?
4. In WWI, what were known a 'V Class Battleships'?
5. What was 'crab fat'?

SEA QUIZ 58...answers.

The compiler of this quiz brought a few comments and long lost memories to the surface, especially about the precise end points (!) of 'E-Boat Alley', and the two AMC's. Cromer pier seemed acceptable, but for some readers, E-Boat Alley ended at Gorleston on Sea....hm?

'Crab Fat' went unexplained.....Crab fat?

1. The Royal Canadian Navy Volunteer Reserve.
2. Between Great Yarmouth and Cromer.
3. These were the 'Flower' Class corvettes, after the BBC Radio Gardener!
4. The two Armed Merchant Cruisers Voltaire and Van Dyke, both lost early in the war.
5. Battleship Grey paint, as used in Home Waters.

Check out www.spanglefish.com/mickyarrowminiatures for 1/1200, 1/3000 and 1/4800 scale ships. Also flags suitable for Norman, Saxon and Viking vessels.

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Rob Morgan

The following is from the MOD Website.

With a flash of fire and a thunderous roar, HMS Daring lit the gloom in spectacular style with the test firing of a Sea Viper missile.



Missile success for HMS Daring

[Picture: Crown Copyright]

The rare sight of an eruption from the silo was a jaw-dropping experience for those on board. Sub Lieutenant Alexandra Evans was on the bridge when the ops room gave the order to test the system. She said:

“It was incredibly bright and fast. It shot off in the blink of an eye. We were watching from the bridge and you could feel the anticipation and adrenaline as everyone waited, silently, listening to the ops room counting down the track.

“All eyes were fixed on the launcher. It was all very British when the test was confirmed. There were no high fives or cheers – just a sense of a job well done.”



Missile success for HMS Daring

[Picture: Crown Copyright]

The first of the Royal Navy's six Type 45 destroyers, Portsmouth-based HMS Daring has had a very busy life. She completed a circumnavigation of the globe from May 2013 to February 2014, during which she conducted important trials of her radars in the Pacific Ocean, helped relieve the stricken islands of the Philippines after typhoon Haiyan struck in late 2013 and conducted wider regional engagements in the Far East and Asia.

Sea Viper is the combination of the Sampson radar system – the distinctive spinning spiked ball on top of a Type 45 destroyer's main mast – and the Aster missile system in a silo on the forecastle. Depending on the missile used – the shorter range Aster 15 and longer range Aster 30 – the system can deal with aerial threats up to 75 miles away, protecting not just the ship herself but an entire task group.

Balsa Boats!!!

If you remember the photo of Don Featherstone's balsa ACW river gun boats in 'Naval Wargames' you'll appreciate this. My old friend Mike Crane of Texarcana in the USA, like me is a believer that you can wargame with almost anything.

He was pottering with balsa recently, and sent me two of the results. A balsa and cocktail stick three masted sailing warship, and a paddle steamer, each with paper sails, but without flags. Each about 50mm long, and 40mm tall.

Basic? Yes. But I managed to play a decent short solo game with them earlier, using Don's one-page rules from the old book.

It reminds me I don't make models often enough, though once if you wanted something beyond a battleship, you had to make it yourself. Ah, memories!

Rob Morgan.



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Royal Navy bomb disposal experts detonated an unexploded Second World War bomb on 22nd February after it was dredged up from the bottom of Portsmouth Harbour. The German SC250 bomb was found in the early hours in the excavator head of a barge dredging the harbour – part of the infrastructure upgrades taking place in readiness for the arrival of the Royal Navy's new 65,000-tonne aircraft carrier. Divers from the Royal Navy's Portsmouth-based Southern Diving Unit 2 towed the bomb away from the harbour, lowered it to the seabed, and planted explosive charges for a controlled detonation of the device. It was destroyed in a plume of smoke and spray. This type of Second World War German SC250 bomb weighs 500lb and contains 290lb of high explosive. This is the fourth unexploded bomb found due to the dredging works that are taking place for the arrival of the Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers. These bombs

are still dangerous despite being several decades old and sitting at the bottom of the seabed for such a long time. English Channel and Isle of Wight Ferries are stopped, train services terminated at Fratton Station. Roads, the "Gunwharf" shopping centre and part of the Naval Base are closed each time just to be sure.

TALOS.

Ancient Greek Mythology's a great place for any naval wargamer to look for inspiration....take galley warfare for example. I've got some old 1/600th Phoenician Biremes and a few of the 1/600th Xyston range which are delightful if expensive. Over recent years the superb, and extensive 1/2400th 'Tumbling Dice' Classical and Ancient naval range which are very reasonably priced have taken centre stage in my thoughts. This is also one of the largest of ranges, with everything from light, fast pirate galleys and Pentecontors, to the enormous Merchant galleys and the powerful Quadriremes to choose from. Google 'Tumbling Dice' and take a look at the web-site.

Of course, for the ancients, myth was as powerful in war as warships. So the release of 'Talos' the Bronze man of Crete in the Mick Yarrow 'Fantasy' range (it's F 25 at around £2, and comes with a useful winged Pegasus, by the way), adds another potential dimension. Talos, who was re-made into bronze by the gods for reasons which probably sounded perfectly reasonable at the time, kept guard over Crete. He appears in 'Jason and the Argonauts' (the film that is) and also in written forms of the myths. '*The Argonautica*' and '*The Voyage of the Argo*' are examples readily available. Poor old Talos loses out to Jason in the end, but his primary role is to protect Crete, he does this by throwing huge rocks at approaching vessels, and is armed with a bronze sword and great spear, but no shield apparently. He can't swim, but is able to wade offshore up to his neck, and thus attack enemies in their own element. He's slow naturally, but has a good reach and doesn't tire at all, he can attack for days on end, and nights too!

The bronze man has only one weakness, like Achilles. He has a single vein running from neck to ankle, and this is stopped by a bronze pin (in the film it's a bronze plug) so, eventually, by removing the pin, Talos bleeds molten lead out of the plug-hole and stops dead in his tracks. All that his opponents have to do is get to the pin.....of course, simple eh? According to the myths, he can also make himself fairly unpleasant by heating his bronze body in fire and causing damage that way, to beached wooden ships, or to fortifications, perhaps. Of course Talos protected his island from Jason, but he may well have had allies to whom he would be friendly.

Before I forget, the Mick Yarrow model's a single 28-30mm high figure in armour, tunic and helmet, with a separate sword. Both hands are open, and so a pin, or big rock can be added to either hand. All he really requires is an undercoat and an overall bronzed finish, with a few interesting highlights. His singular weakness, if you use him on the table top with any of the vessels named earlier, means that in the water divers might be effective against him. Ashore a sort of 'suicide squad' attack, unless maybe you've got an early stone throwing engine. If he's 'hot' then it's a case of get out of the way quickly.

Talos might attack every ship on the board, or be selective, if he recognises allies. He will be active at night so beaching your victorious galleys and allowing the exhausted crews a rest on land might be difficult... until he's destroyed. As for the model, well it's not too expensive to buy a couple, one used full figure for shore duty, and another cut to the tunic bottom or waist, to be shown wading at sea. The helmet's a crested job, by the way, and it may be that you could find a simple 25mm ancient head, and forearm with sword, axe or spear, to mount on a sea base- the 'Tumbling Dice' range have wrecked and sinking oared ships which would suit nicely. This 28mm bronze man will fit into 1/600th, 1/1200th or 1/2400th, even 1/3000th scales, easily, he just becomes a bit bigger and more menacing. Don't forget if this bronze assassin sees off your fleet, when you get home it might be worth petitioning Zeus for a similar model to add to your own island's coastal defence system.

A marvellous addition to enliven classical naval warfare. Though of course if you're gaming a shore landing you could add a 54mm Greek painted bronze overall for similar purpose. Simple.

Rob Morgan.

Wales and Sea Battles

Rob Morgan

When as a youngster I taught Geography, the opening line of the standard textbook described Wales as "A peninsula, bounded on three sides by the sea, and on the fourth by England." The latter having been far more troublesome to the inhabitants than the waters, of course!

Having long had an interest in naval affairs, and once Secretary of the Welsh Maritime Association, I thought about Welsh battlefields, and any counterparts they might have had in the waters off Wales.



THE DEVALS POINT

A few events come to mind. The Romans opposed crossing of the Menai Straits, naturally, though not an encounter between ships, while Loughor and Barry are sites of Roman coastguard bases. Numerous small sea-fights in the Viking era, one I believe off the mouth of the Wye, and a thousand years ago, the Kings of Gwynedd kept a small fleet to oppose Irish pirates, and deter English incursions.

The early medieval period was one of much piracy of course, and English Kings kept a galley at Carmarthen to defend merchants. The medieval journal *Hoblior* carried an article a few years ago, entitled 'Bosworth: The Naval Campaign', describing the landing of Henry Tudor. It wasn't an invasion in any sense, at Dale, and the further activities of the fleet which carried him there.



1600-1610

Tenby Castle gate Charles Norris

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During the Civil Wars in 1643, Tenby was bombarded from the sea, and Welsh waters were active in the Williamite Wars at the end of the 1600s. As for the Bonapartist Wars, well, HM Customs produced a very useful booklet in the late 1990s detailing the opposition of the French invasion fleet, at Fishguard, by two small Revenue Cutters; though it wasn't a battle, fortunately, for these two lightly armed craft.



The fabled CSS Alabama, painting from the US Navy historical centre

fortunate CSS Fingal, which sailed from Holyhead.

An interesting piece of naval information appeared in an article in *Maritime Wales* over twenty years ago; surprisingly, the American Civil War saw a deal of naval activity on the part of the Confederacy in Welsh waters.

Among the warships involved was the fabled Raider CSS Alabama, which fitted out for her war cruise in Moelfre Bay, and the less

In the twentieth century, despite U-Boats sunk off the coast and some tragic wartime losses, there was no naval encounter to speak of. But all in all, it is worth remembering that there's a sea side to Wales, as an historic battleground.



Holyhead, Oldemps.co.uk

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Decommissioned French Warships.....A Rob Morgan Holiday Note!

Another of my 'holiday snaps'; well, sort of. I bought this print at a postcard stall in a street market in Brittany for less than a Euro. It's of half a dozen French warships laid up and waiting for the scrapyard, taken at Roscanvel, not far from Brest, the French naval base. I suppose, if I knew more about the modern navy of the Republic, this photo could make a 'Sea Quiz' in its own right! As it is the pencilled note at the back tells where it was taken, I've been there in the past year, but on a day so wet, miserable and misty it could have been *'Bismarck'* at anchor across the bay, it was utterly impossible to identify anything.

However, this is said to be *De Grasse* and 'escorteurs' awaiting their fate. It could well be the former A.A Cruiser/ Command Ship, and a handful of smaller craft, the nearest of the right hand group could be a frigate of the *'Le Normand'* Class. The small vessel on the extreme right seems to be a Minesweeper. There's a pennant number on *De Grasse's* stern (If it is her) but I can't make it out, she carried C610 according to Jane's. The two warships alongside her appear to be two funnelled and might be *'Surcouf'* Class destroyers?

The print bears the date 'Avril 2010', and since, if I'm right, these are the ships I think they are, all would have been fifty years old by then, The 14 Frigates in the *'Le Normand'* Class were built between 1953 and 1957, and the *'Surcouf's'*, of which class there were twelve, were built at the very start of the 1950's. All pretty ancient by 2010. *'De Grasse'*, Jane's tells me was actually ordered in 1937, and not completed until 1951, however, I've no doubt that someone of Gallic nautical persuasion among the members of the NWS will be able to add a lot more information- or correct my errors.

Any ideas?



SEA QUIZ 59.

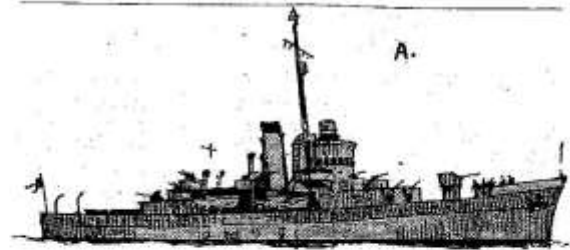
An all picture quiz this time, from 1954. Number one's tricky. Good luck!

Rob Morgan.

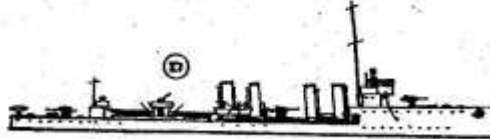
1. Which Warship had these distinctive funnels?



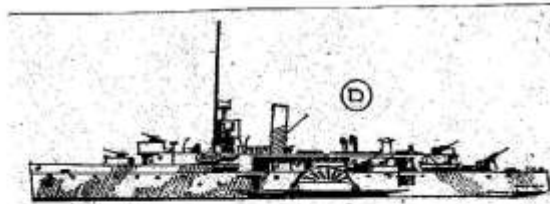
2. Name this class of WWII escorts...



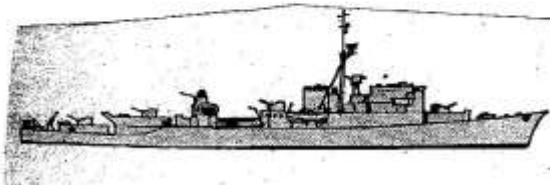
3. Name the two WWI Destroyers of this type...



4. What was the name of this WWII Anti-Aircraft Ship?



5. Name this Class and type.



More from 'Spy Story.'

My note on the Len Deighton novel dealing with big wargames was, my colleague Geoffrey suggested, 'incomplete.' Thanks Geoff... On Pages 64-65, there appears a crucial point in the wargame, when Red Suite acquires two Be-10 'Mallow' jet flying boats operating from Murmansk (and I thought this was a seventies novel?) . The Red Ops commander decides to 'put the 'Mallows' down on the ice' to hunt for a US Elint sub. Saying ' they've got wheels-either the ice is thick enough to take the weight of them, or they'll float.' Hm? Interesting.....not surprisingly the Study Centre Umpire decides to wreck the two, but the Red Ops commander argues that it could be done. Could it? The 'Mallow' was a poor choice of flying boat, so obviously sound fiction, as most of them, only around fifty were made in all, operated in the Black Sea I believe, and in any case the aircraft suffered problems after crashes in the early sixties, was made of poor quality aluminium and indeed only had auxiliary landing gear, they were after all, simply flying boats. The question is of course whether this or any other Soviet flying boat could operate in this unusual way? Well armed and with a decent ASW suite it might, as Deighton's book suggest change the tactical maps if it worked.
Is there a wargame option in this?
Has it ever been done?

Rob Morgan

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www.navalwargamessociety.org.

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