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# All Guns Blazing!

## Newsletter of the Naval Wargames Society

### No. 296 – JUNE 2019

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#### EDITORIAL

Welcome to new Members Leith Golding and James McLeod. We are still just short of the 200 barrier for distribution of AGB by email.

I've seen photographs and reviews of Salute in April. It seems a great time was had by all. Well done to those who contributed to the NWS participation game "Stingray". I had "a go" at a wargames weekend a few years ago and it is a lot of fun.

On a personal note: I have retired after 49 years as a Civil Servant in the UK's Ministry of Defence. I have had many varied jobs for all three services in that time, including Headstone Clerk in the RAF Casualty Branch; finishing in the Navy Department in HM Naval Base Portsmouth. Perhaps now I can get those gardening and decorating jobs done and play a few more wargames.

Norman Bell

"We have a navy. Some people seem to forget that we have a navy. We must remind them".

Winston Churchill June 8<sup>th</sup>, 1940. Part of a speech more readily remembered as his "Finest Hour" speech. After the evacuation from Dunkirk, Churchill never doubted that the fight should go on.



Old Dominion Gameworks produce ship bases for both age of sail ships and 20<sup>th</sup> century vessels. Just a thought – the 20<sup>th</sup> Century bases could also be used as torpedo markers.

The Times newspaper includes a regular column, "Weather Eye" by Paul Simons. When there is a Naval/War connection, Rob Morgan brings them to my attention. For example, the well-known forecasting of the weather for the D Day landings has been covered and also (i) how the wind direction was crucial to the landing of Prince William of Orange which ended the unpopular reign of James II. (ii) how the French invasion fleet of 43 ships in 1796 was wrecked by severe gales and how the French invasion fleet in 1798 was hounded by the British in increasingly stormy seas – the French Flagship, Hoche, lost its three topmasts in the gale and was then battered by the British. (iii) the storm of 1809 when HMS Warren Hastings, moored off Portsmouth was struck 3 times by what is now believed to be ball lightning, killing and seriously injuring sailors, setting fire to the Ship and shattering the main mast. (iv) how Nelson judged the changing wind direction which enabled him to navigate the shoals and attack the Danish Fleet at Copenhagen. Three Ships grounded and when Admiral Sir Hyde Parker saw their distress signals, he ordered Nelson to withdraw. This is when Nelson famously put his telescope to his blind eye and said, "I really do not see the signal". (vi) the sun was shining on Darwin in February 1942 when the packed harbour was attacked by Japanese aircraft. 152 bombers with fighter escort attacked at just before 10a.m. The bombing lasted 30 minutes and 21 ships were sunk or damaged. The number of ships in the port was increased as several were sheltering because of fog on the previous day. More bombs were dropped on Darwin than on Pearl Harbor. (vii) last and probably least, how on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1972 a solar storm was blamed for the near simultaneous explosion of dozens of magnetic sea mines laid by the U.S. near Hon La, North Vietnam.

Hi Norman,

I was watching the Jutland edition of 'Drain the Oceans' last week which included the wrecks of the scuttled German fleet at Scapa Flow, and had an idea, how about a participation game by NWS of the scuttling of the German fleet? The value of strength of Communist Sailor Committee v value for Strength of Loyalty of Officers to German Pride, for /on each of the major battleships /battlecruisers could play a part ???!! Just thought I would pass the idea on to NWS through yourself. It would certainly be something different at Origins or somewhere!  
With best wishes for happy naval gaming to all NWS members.

Most sincerely,  
Bruce Dawson



Models are all well and good; and I've seen some very impressive ones over the years. But naval wargaming can be very cheap for beginners or if you want to try a new historical period before committing your hard earned cash.

### Sea Quiz 83...

Nothing stirred the pens of the readership more than quiz questions about medals and decorations, and number one did just that, though (hint, hint) I doubt if any of the readers could recall its introduction! 'Octopus' gave that one 10 marks by the way....

1. In which year was the Naval Long Service and Good Conduct Medal instituted?
2. Which vessel always precedes the Royal Yacht in coastal waters?
3. Naval vessels are normally well equipped, but which RN ship featured a squash court amongst its amenities?
4. Excepting HMS Vanguard, which ship in the Royal Navy now carries the largest guns?
5. What have the following ships in common? 'Urania' of the Netherlands, 'Sagres' of Portugal and 'Falken' of Sweden.

There's a twinge of nostalgia, reading question 4, naturally, and the answer surprised me, so I looked it up. Question 3 leads to the obvious second query, where the hell did they put it???

Rob Morgan.



Wargaming the three dimensions of below the waves, on the surface and in the air can be tricky but not impossible. You just have to decide how complicated you want to make it.

Photo from the Conn-Sonar Facebook page.

The model is by Langton Miniatures and is very detailed indeed. That stern you see in the photo is one centimetre wide! Well done to Farish A Noor. I'm impressed.



World At War Number 66 Game Edition Magazine includes. ***Cruise of the Graf Spee*** which is an operational-tactical solitaire game that puts you in command of the KMS Graf Spee, the German battlecruiser that made a historic epic voyage through the South Atlantic during the opening days of World War II. The player must accomplish a specific "objective" to win the game that will be generated at random at the start of each scenario or the campaign game. You manage the various out fittings and functions of the Graf Spee. As you fight your way throughout the South Atlantic and Indian Ocean, you will encounter Allied warships, merchantmen, and unexpected opportunities and objectives. German ships in the game are shown in detail with the Allied ships shown in an abstract manner. Each turn represents one full day. Nautical spaces are 100 nautical miles apart with the game system using point to point movement. Two players can co-operate as the Graf Spee and the Deutschland to outwit the searching RN ships and task forces. Will the Graf Spee come up against the Exeter, Ajax and Achilles again? Or will she escape back to Germany after sinking many allied merchantmen?



Designed by Iron Wolf Studio "U-BOOT: The Board Game" is a fully cooperative, real-time tabletop game of WW2 submarine warfare. There are plenty of positive comments about this game on the web, do any NWS Members have any thoughts for AGB? Perhaps a longer article for, "Battlefleet?"



Secretary of the US Navy Richard V. Spencer has named a future Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer, DDG 133, in honour of U.S. Senator Sam Nunn, who represented Georgia from 1972 to 1997. Nunn served in the U.S. Coast Guard 1959 to 1960 and remained in the Coast Guard Reserve until 1968. He was elected to the House of Representatives in 1968 and in 1972 was elected to the U.S. Senate. He served as chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services and the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations.

F/A-18E Super Hornets from Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 136 "Knighthawks" fly in formation during a photo exercise over the California coast.



June 1944 was witness to two epic amphibious operations: Normandy in the Atlantic and Saipan in the Pacific.

It is with great sadness.....

Actually I do from time to time write obituaries, but this one's for a magazine. A letter which arrived yesterday addressed to Society of Twentieth Century Wargamers Member 516, tells me that after 95 issues, each one a valuable fifty page contribution to the world of wargaming, land, sea and air, "*The Journal*" has ceased publication. It would be foolish to say that with only one out of the last five or six issues published at all, it was unexpected.

But.....with the two world wars and a thousand other complex conflicts during the twentieth century, in naval terms covering the entire face of the globe, this must be one of the most astonishing wargame closures of recent times. I'm not just saying that because I had a regular column and SOTCW published me for the best of twenty years, but because this really is a loss! I've recorded others, of groups which could never, ever, pretend to be anything more than a fringe interest. Magazines like '*Frontovik*' of the Eastern Front 1914-21 Society, and '*Abanderado!*' and '*News from the Front*' representing the Spanish Civil War; both gone. Yet, for the entire century to slip into an abyss in wargames terms is something far worse, and must surely bode ill.

The NWS may well pick up a few more members with SOTCW's virtual disappearance; '*The Journal*' had some fine writers and carried decent articles on war at sea, but it's a demise worth all of us reflecting upon.

Rob Morgan.

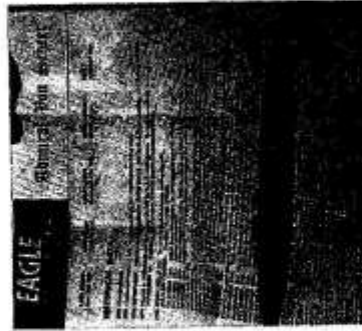
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**4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> June 1942.** The Battle of Midway, fought near the Central Pacific island of Midway, is considered the decisive battle of the war in the Pacific. Before this battle the Japanese were on the offensive, capturing territory throughout Asia and the Pacific. The Japanese had planned to capture Midway to use as an advance base, as well as to entrap and destroy the U.S. Pacific Fleet. Because of communication intelligence successes, the U.S. Pacific Fleet surprised the Japanese forces, sinking the four Japanese carriers that had attacked Pearl Harbor only six months before, while only losing one carrier. After Midway, the Americans and their Allies took the offensive in the Pacific.

**Admiral Scheer**

LOOKING THROUGH my collection of *Airfix* Magazines recently, I noticed some correspondence in the September and October 1969 and April 1970 issues referring to Eagle ship kits. All the authors seemed to be concerned with the actual number of ship kits Eagle manufactured

*AIRFIX* magazine



before they ceased production in 1960. The *Admiral Scheer* was mentioned by Mr J. C. Crane in the October 1969 issue as having drawings prepared for it, but not the mould. However, I have in my possession a model of the *Admiral Scheer*, together with the instruction sheet, although I sadly no longer have the box. If your correspondents are correct, therefore, I would appear to have something of a rarity on my hands, and would be grateful to hear from other readers on this subject, as I find it hard to believe that if one kit was produced there were not more.

A. S. Gilbert, Walthamstow, London.

"Admiral von Scheer."

Now 'Airfix Magazine' to my mind served the wargames community well for many years, when most of the many 'new' Societies infant publications were rolled off on a Roneo machine and photos were a dream for the distant future. So many letters in that mag began with the expression 'Looking through my collection of Airfix Magazines recently, I noticed...' Well, I was doing just that earlier. Looking for a two page article on WWII "A-I" Destroyers. I found it, in the August 1964 issue, a time when Warship modelling had almost as much space as AFV modelling. But, in the search, I found in November 1972 there was a letter and a photo on a subject dear to my heart but now vanished for all time.

'Eaglewall Kits', of course, and the letter's author, one A.S. Gilbert of Walthamstow pitched into a long running discussion on which ships the 'Eagle' company actually made. It seems that 'Scheer' being one of the warships spoken of in the 'Did they? Didn't they make it?' group of 1/1200<sup>th</sup>'s made (or not!) had really appeared before the company ceased trading in 1960 (I thought it was a year or two later?). The writer shows, in a photograph of a quality almost as poor as mine tend to be, the instruction sheet and constructed model. He'd lost the box, so couldn't show the art work. Pity. He actually pondered that this might be the only model made, but that couldn't be true. These splendid early wargames models have been mentioned in these pages from time to time, and so I wondered if anyone has a recognisable photo or two of any of them? I particularly loved the little Depot ships 'Saar' and 'Acheron', which I must have owned until I went off to University and found beer.

Rob Morgan.

### SEA QUIZ 83, answers.....

Well, another far from easy selection this month, how many did you get?

1. This was in 1830. Debate centred on earlier attempts to initiate awards.
2. This is the Trinity House Yacht, at the time of the question being posed, it was the yacht 'Patricia'.
3. Well, I couldn't even guess this one, but it was the Battlecruiser *HMS Repulse*, 'refitted' (*sic*) for the World Tour of the Prince of Wales in the 1930's.
4. Ah, yes! This was the lingering Monitor *HMS Roberts*, with 15in guns, and in the mid 1950's still in service at Devonport as Reserve Fleet store and accommodation ship.
5. These were both Sail Training Ships.

By the way 'Octopus' awarded 9 points if you knew the answer to question 3. No-one actually wrote in to say where the squash court was placed, or what it replaced, for that matter.

More next month.

Rob Morgan.

*This is a note, a query really, which I wrote for the Solo Wargamers blog recently. I thought it might be of interest to any NWS members who fight the Pacific Campaigns, and might have wargamed the sea fight at Okinawa.*  
Rob Morgan.

### BATTLESHIPS AT OKINAWA 1945.

The American Fleet at Okinawa during Operation Iceberg was truly immense, and was accompanied by the small British task Force. The critical point of the operation, massive *kamikaze* attacks aside, must have been the Japanese surface attack, Operation Ten Ho, the final voyage of *Yamato*. She was destroyed by US air power of course, but during the fighting on Okinawa there was a period of bad weather known as the 'plum rains'.

What if Ito's small force had attacked during the bad weather? If air power had been ineffective for reason of adverse weather conditions? Well. Halsey of course had no fewer than eight fast modern battleships....*USS's Massachusetts, Indiana, North Carolina, Washington, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Missouri, and New Jersey.* He could also call on *HMS King George V* and *HMS Howe*. In all, 72-16 in guns, plus 20-14in guns against 9-18in. There were in addition ten older US battleships in



the bombardment groups, *USS Texas, Idaho, Nevada, etc* with an immense number of 12in and 14in guns carried. The Japanese 'raid', as it is so often described, could, quite possibly have been the last Battleship encounter in history. On paper, not only one sided, but a clear wipe-out. Or not? Has anyone in the SWA ever wargamed this potential encounter, particularly in less than good weather conditions?

This must surely have been the largest concentration of Battleships in one campaign since Jutland. How would the *Yamato* have fared before being overwhelmed? I'm reminded, incidentally, that one of the US warships, *USS Washington* was the only modern American capital ship to engage an enemy vessel of similar size, the old pre-WWI battlecruiser *Kirishima* in 1942.

Rob Morgan.



*Yamato*. Here's the photo of my 1/1200th and very old Pyro kit, dates from the early 80's if I recall...  
Rob Morgan

### **SIGNAL PAD!**

Following David Manley's suggestion on his wargames blog and the Naval Wargames Facebook Group, that the Battle of the Denmark Strait should be refought using different rules by as many people as possible with AARs then posted to promote naval wargames, I have used Minden Games European Advanced Salvo and the Avalon Hill 1962 edition of Bismarck to replay the battle. I hope to have additional replays soon using 3W's Salvo, Naval Thunder/Bitter Rivals and Decision Games' Folio Game.

Advanced Salvo produced a tactical victory for the RN, with enough damage to the Bismarck to force a U-turn back to Germany for repairs. Avalon Hill's Board game, famous for not having the Prince Eugen and for the worse box art ever (the Second edition has in my opinion the best box Art ever) plays starting the Bismarck at a Norway Fjord. In my replay, the Bismarck passed north of Iceland, narrowly missing the Norfolk and Suffolk during the night of May 23<sup>rd</sup> / 24<sup>th</sup>. The RN ships tried to encircle the position unknown Bismarck, without much success. On the afternoon of the 24<sup>th</sup> Bismarck found and sunk an independently sailing fast troop ship. Elsewhere south of Iceland a U-Boat put a torpedo into the Hood. With the position of the Bismarck now known, south

west of Iceland, the Battleship Ramilles detached from a convoy and engaged the Bismarck late in the day on the 24<sup>th</sup> May. Both ships exchanged blows with the Ramilles inflicting serious damage to the stern turrets of Bismarck. Ramilles lost "A" turret, secondary armament and midship damage. With night falling and the advantage passing to the Bismarck, Ramilles withdrew to lick her wounds. The Bismarck must decide whether to head for France or back to Germany.



On 6<sup>th</sup> June 1944 and during the long summer that followed, men from all over the free world came to fight in Normandy to defeat Nazism. Thank you.

<http://en.normandie-tourisme.fr/calendar-of-events/anniversary-of-d-day-847-2.html>

To commemorate the 75th anniversary of the D-Day landings, a host of special events will take place across the UK and France. The UK's Ministry of Defence has announced one of the biggest mobilisations of the UK Armed Forces in recent years, including over 4,000 personnel, 11 Royal Navy vessels and multiple aircraft, including of course the Spitfire. Portsmouth, where much of the landing force sailed from in 1944, will be the focal point of the UK commemorations and will host the UK national event on 5 June. Portsmouth City Council is also planning a series of events over the following four days to reflect the area's unique role in one of the largest and well-known military operations ever.

**AUG 6<sup>th</sup>.**

## International Naval Wargames Day 2019

David Manley.

Celebrate the birth of the father of naval wargaming, Fred T Jane, on the occasion of his birthday. Play games, solo or with friends, and post your action reports on the INWarD Facebook page, your blog or your favourite wargaming websites. Help raise the profile of naval wargaming by supporting INWarD 2019!

## Naval Wargames Weekend, October 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> 2019

**NWS NEWS**

The Naval Wargames Society is holding the ninth annual weekend of naval wargaming. As last year the event will be at the Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton, so expect some games featuring the FAA and the RNAS!

The emphasis of the event is on games and getting together, and we have had a lovely selection in recent years. Although it is primarily a gaming event there may well be some trade stands attending too and traders are welcome to attend (be aware it is a small event). We are on the lookout

for volunteers to run games at the event. If you'd like to put on a game on either or both days, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Plenty of space and tables are available and there should be room for upwards of ten tables available of varying sizes. There will be a small charge for participation – last year this was £5 for one day, £7.50 for both days.

The aim of the event is to provide a forum where naval (and other) gamers can come together to run and/or play in each others' games. Games can be as long or as short as you like, and the intention is to include a few participation games so that members of the public can join in too.

For more details, or to book a table for a game for all or part of the weekend please contact Dave Sharp. Contact details for the Fleet Air Arm Museum are at the link: <http://www.fleetairarm.com/find-fleet-air-arm-museum.aspx>

[dave\\_sharp@talktalk.net](mailto:dave_sharp@talktalk.net)    dave(underscore)[sharp@talktalk.net](mailto:sharp@talktalk.net)

Coming in July's AGB: Rob's thoughts on "Battlefleet". CSS Virginia and lots more hopefully.

### **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)

## **NWS Events and Regional Contacts, 2019**

### **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](mailto: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](mailto:stuart_barnes_watson@hotmail.com)

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

Tel: 01271 866637

**Uruguay, SCOW: Southern Cone Orientales Wargamers** • Games erupt, inquire to set one off: Bill Owen US telephone is [217-619-0202](tel:217-619-0202), Uruguay 099 834 544 [WmOwen@aol.com](mailto:WmOwen@aol.com) • If Spanish speaking, email & I will get someone who speaks it better. • Soca, Canelones or in Montevideo we can arrange a "Graf Spee 3 Gun Salvo": see her 5.9" gun, anchor & rangefinder salvaged from the ship resting in the harbor, a Real English Tour conducted by British expat staff who were associated with the British Ambassador who won the post-battle diplomacy and subterfuge plus, of course, a GQ3 refight of the battle (fees for features like museum & tour). • Most of the Salvo can even be done during a cruise ship stop in MVD from a Round Cape Horn itinerary between Santiago<->Buenos Aires.  
• [wargamecampaign.wordpress.com](http://wargamecampaign.wordpress.com)

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