



All Guns Blazing!

Newsletter of the Naval Wargames Society

No. 318 – April 2021

The 19th to the 24th August 1702 saw Vice Admiral Benbow fighting Capt Ducasse North West of Santa Marta, Columbia. (English ships: Breda, Defiance, Falmouth, Greenwich, Pendennis, Ruby, Windsor. French ships: Ann Galley, Apollon, Heureux, Prince-de-Frise). After the battle, Capt Ducasse wrote to Benbow: "Sir, I had little hope on Monday but to have supped in your cabbin (sic); but it pleased God to order it otherwise. I am thankful for it. As for those cowardly captains who deserted you, hang them up, for by heaven, they deserve it." On 16th April 1703, Capt Kirby of the Defiance and Capt Wade of the Greenwich were shot following their courts martial.

15th April 1942. The island of Malta was awarded the George Cross. King George VI sent the following message to the Governor: "To honour her brave people I award the George Cross to the island fortress of Malta to bear witness to a heroism and devotion that will long be famous in history."

HMS Montrose Type 23 Frigate is based in Bahrain as part of an international task force to combat criminal and terrorist activities. Her Royal Marines boarded a dhow and 275Kg of pure heroin were found with a street value of £5.3M. Just 36 hours later a second dhow was boarded and 2,145Kg of hashish, heroin and methamphetamine was seized. Street value £5.6M. Take that evil drug lords.

The Covid 19 restrictions meant that the annual remembrance service, was a reduced affair at Faslane Cemetery, for the 32 deaths when the submarine K13 was lost on a test dive 104 years ago. Captain I Lindsay RN, Captain of the Submarine Flotilla laid a wreath and K13's Bell was rung 32 times.

I read an article recently which included the throw away comment that HMS ANSON and HMS HOWE, the fourth and fifth King George V Class battleships were originally to be named JELLICOE and BEATTY. No explanation for the name change was given. Does anyone know anything?

SEA QUIZ...103.

This month, with Winter behind us, (in the Northern Hemisphere) I've looked for a few more of the unusual questions, they tend to come from the pen of 'Octopus', and if he's still around and reading this, do get in touch....I'd love to know your sources!

1. Under the US Navy's classification of warships, what type of vessel was identified as CVS?

2. Which two 'R' Class Battleships had dummy warships to represent them in early WWII?
3. Which naval disaster did Jellicoe survive in the 1890's?
4. The surrender of which Confederate cruiser to British authorities in November 1865 was the last naval act of the American Civil War?
5. Which type of naval vessels were painted white from March 1919?

Since these were written in 1955, it seems surprising (at least to me) how many correspondents still had a viewpoint on the 'disaster' mentioned in question 3! Rob Morgan.

The Battle of Sandwich, also called the Battle of Dover took place on 24th August 1217 as part of the First Barons' War. A Plantagenet English fleet commanded by Hubert de Burgh attacked a Capetian French armada led by Eustace the Monk and Robert of Courtenay off Sandwich, Kent. The English captured the French flagship and most of the supply vessels, forcing the rest of the French fleet to return to Calais.

The next Battle of Sandwich was a naval skirmish off the town of Sandwich on the 15th January 1460 during the Wars of the Roses. In it, Sir John Dynham and the Earl of Warwick, Captain of Calais, on the Yorkist side, defeated a Lancastrian fleet and captured several of its ships. Little evidence and few details of the battle survive.

There is no truth in the rumour that the battles nearly never took place because the Captains were on a diet.



USS Nevada in 1925, probably during visit to Australia, prior to the removal of her cage masts.
(Picture from Wikipedia)



The Sullivan brothers on board the USS Juneau; from left to right: Joseph, Francis, Albert, Madison and George, February 14, 1942. U.S. Naval Historical Center photo.

USS *The Sullivans* (DDG-68), an [Arleigh Burke-class Aegis guided missile destroyer](#). She is the second ship of the [United States Navy](#) to be named for the five [Sullivan brothers](#) – George, Francis, Joseph, Madison, and Albert Sullivan, aged 20 to 27 – who lost their lives when their ship, [USS *Juneau*](#), was sunk by a Japanese [submarine](#) in November 1942 in the [Naval Battle of Guadalcanal](#). This was the greatest military loss by any one American family during [World War II](#).

The first ship named for the brothers was the [Fletcher-class destroyer USS *The Sullivans* \(DD-537\)](#), now a [museum ship](#) in Buffalo, New York.



Light rays bent by warm air over a cold layer produce a superior mirage more usual in polar areas than off the coast of Cornwall as in this case. The ship is over the horizon but the atmosphere is acting as a refracting lens. The photo taken by David Morris has been widely circulated around the world, so you may have already seen it – and no it is not an April fool's joke.



“Atlantic Chase” from GMT is hitting the streets. Can anybody write a review?

An Important Note on Naval Wargaming.

In ‘Mariner’s Mirror’, vol 107:1, for February 2021, which has just dropped on my doormat, there’s a remarkable four-page article by James Smith of the Department of War Studies at Kings College London, entitled “*New Research into History, Theory and Practice of Naval Wargaming.*” The frequent mentions by myself and others of material, of articles, reviews and odds and ends which appear in this august journal, rarely mention wargames as a specific subject, but this piece is a worthy exception.

I recommend it to all NWS members, and recommend it as essential reading.

Kings College, as readers of the SNR newsletter ‘*Topmasts*’ will be aware, has recently regenerated naval wargaming as a central feature of the development of strategic theory, a cornerstone of its research, with the active support of the SNR. Smith rightly identifies that in the late 1800’s and in the early 20th century wargames were used as a tool to support the examination of historical naval activity and renew the message of naval power. Smith uses a delightful term which we certainly couldn’t contemplate using now... ‘*The British seapower state*’ reflecting the strength of the Royal Navy and the necessity of possessing and developing global naval strategy. Naval wargaming was an essential part of the shop window, the ‘public relations’ message which had to be understood.

The author mentions a number of early naval wargames publications; Castle’s 1873 “*Game of Naval Tactics*” article as well as Pratt and Janes’, and the powerful supporters of the systems developed; like Knox Laughton, Corbett and Mahan. He references four RUSI Journal articles from pre-1900, three of which I did not know, but I suspect were in the old ‘*Pallas Armata*’ list.

Naval wargaming developed from ship v ship to the more substantial amphibious operations and convoy and blockade scenarios required by Admiralties. He recognises the importance of Fred Janes’ exceptionally well defined gaming structure, and refers to some key C20th developments in the Royal Navy, the 1921 rules among them. There is a delightful photograph of Fred Jane with the models of his naval game spread before him (p.102) which will interest us all I suspect.

As Smith says, wargaming was fundamental to naval operations in WWII, and in the three or four decades before the millennium became indispensable to all navies. He nods towards us, “*naval wargaming for the hobbyists grew in the public domain in the 1970’s as players engaged in wargaming for fun around the world in an ever-increasing range of formats.*” I cannot be alone in finding it disappointing that well over fifty years after the creation of our own Society, and of fifty odd years of vigorous and published activity, we should, at least in my opinion be regarded as more than mere ‘hobbyists’, ‘engaged in wargaming for fun’. Like the earliest of gamers, Pratt and Jane, our role should be far more substantial and widespread, and be recognised for what it should and could be.

He specifically refers to the now far more accessible numbers of archives, histories and documents which have revealed the scope and influence of naval wargaming since the late Ironclad days, and if nothing else there’s value in our turning towards that horizon. Smith’s conclusions on the creation of naval wargaming as a practical foundation and not a side story are well put, and his final paragraph is, as far as our Society, and many other professional and ‘hobby’ naval wargaming structures are concerned, a clear and direct hit.

Rob Morgan.

March 2021

SEA QUIZ 103...answers.

Well, I for one didn’t know about the vessels in question 5, but thought the answer to question 4 had a poignant ring to it. Six months beyond the fall of the Confederacy. Seems incredible now! As for Jellicoe’s good fortune, there were half a dozen comments on the fate of the ships rather than the Admiral’s good luck....

1. CVS = Seaplane Carrier.
2. These were *HMS’s Resolution* and *Revenge*. Anyone used a dummy battleship in a wargame, I wonder?
3. This, of course was the fatal collision between *HMS’s Victoria* and *Camperdown* in the Med in 1893. Jellicoe was a Commander in the first of these and was in the sick bay when disaster struck.
4. This was the sailing ship *CSS Shenandoah*. A tremendous cruise and one comparable to that of a German raider in WWI.
5. These were Royal Navy Survey Ships.

More next month.

Rob Morgan.

SIGNAL PAD

The Excel Centre, location of “Salute” each year was designated as a “Nightingale” Hospital which fortunately was not needed. It is being used however as an inoculation venue, so who knows if the 2021 rescheduled “Salute” will happen in the autumn.

The pbem Battle of Narvik is drawing to a close. Who did what to who? Find out in the soon to be circulated AAR.

NWS Events and Regional Contacts, 2021

NWS Northern Fleet – Falkirk East Central Scotland

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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)

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

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 • 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

THE NAVAL WARGAMES SOCIETY <http://www.navalwargamessociety.org> (Victorian Division “Cerberus”) Email: nws.victoria.au@gmail.com Membership by e-Subscription to NWS BATTLEFLEET magazine.

NWS Scapa Flow – Orkney

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Also see www.orkneywargames.com

Orkney Wargames Club meets each Thursday evening from 6pm and caters for all kinds of wargames. Naval games are popular, with at least one game run each month. We also host an annual wargaming event, **Northern Invasion**, involving other clubs from the North of Scotland.

- Popular periods: The Age of Fighting Sail, Pre-Dreadnought, WW1, WW2 and WW2 Coastal.