



All Guns Blazing!

Newsletter of the Naval Wargames Society

No. 191 –March 2010

EDITORIAL

I've been pondering signalling this month. Even a casual reading of naval actions from the Dutch Wars onwards highlights the overriding importance of a few square feet of 'bunting' on the handling—or *mishandling*—of a fleet in battle. Naval wargamers can often get overly wrapped up in all the fascinating aspects of gunnery and damage control (and being an avid *Seekrieg V* user, I'm one of the guiltiest on that score), while neglecting just how the 'big guns' were brought into action in the first place. The truth is Jellicoe was let down far more at Jutland by signalling than by shells that failed to detonate properly or by battlecruisers that detonated all too easily. In fairness to my much-loved *Seekrieg*, the rules do feature an excellent command and control system, but its main role in a tabletop encounter is how it is affected by damage, rather than imposing a tactical delay. Of course, a mini-campaign would bring out more opportunity for signalling in *Seekrieg*, as in most other rules.

Before I began using *Seekrieg* in earnest, I tended to favour Clash of Arms' *Fear God & Dread Nought*, and they employ a very usable system for signalling with flags, signal lamp or WT; and when used fully they add another layer of realism to games. I found the *FG&DN* system very flexible and it was easily 'grafted' onto *Fire When Ready* (as they both use a three-minute turn), and I've toyed with the idea of adapting them for use with *Stations Manned and Ready* and even *Seekrieg*.

Of course, if you really want to go to town on signalling, it may help to use a more easily implemented combat system than *FG&DN* or *Seekrieg*. I remember reading an article on a Jutland re-fight in one of the 'glossy' magazines a few years ago that was very much this type of command and control game. I can't remember who wrote it (maybe it was one of us?), but this necessarily multi-player event even went to the extreme of requiring players to work out their map position with a ruler (lots of room for error here!) and encode and decode WT signals; any that were sent 'in clear' could be read by the enemy! The result, I seem to recall, was a thoroughly 'historical' sort of Jutland—confusion all round!

I suppose what I'm trying to get around to is that if you've had any experience of writing signalling rules (any period) or organized any signal-heavy games, I would be interested to hear your thoughts on the subject—and if submitted as part of a short game report, well, all the better!

You may recall that last month I said I was going to be very busy working in Northampton on a show at the Theatre there? Well things turned out rather well. The 'musical' I was expecting about Judy Garland was in fact a play—with *hardly any music in it at all!* Thus, your humble scribe was able to get in lots and lots of reading between numbers! Most productive, just my sort of show! Now the other odd thing (and I still can't quite believe it myself) was that in a band of only six, there were *three Patrick O'Brian fans!* Well, you'd expect it of me, wouldn't you, and I knew the drummer was; but at the first rehearsal he told me he'd got the MD (musical director) into them a few weeks previously, and then the trombone player went and bought 'Master and Commander'! So that made four of us! What a literary band it was. I was still the only wargamer though, sad to say.

No battle report I'm afraid this month, chaps, but a couple of pieces by Rob Morgan, and yet another Russo-Japanese War book review from yours truly as well as a 'flyer' that I received from Clash of Arms about a card-based Midway game that I thought you may find interesting.

Piping 'Up Spirits'

Richard Wimpenny

wimpenny@talktalk.net

PAPER SHIPWRIGHT SCALE MODELS

Rob Morgan

The information that this company existed was sent to me by Ralph Weaver, the editor of *The Foreign Correspondent*, a journal that covers land and naval European warfare between 1815 and 1914. Take a look at this site: www.papershipwright.co.uk. Run by David Hathaway, 'Paper Shipwright' is at 28 Hayster Drive, Cambridge, CB1 9PB.

There is a pair of German river monitors, SMS *Rhein* and *Mosel*, built after the Franco-Prussian War and very intriguing little warships they are, with a few remarkable features...they could be 'sunk' up to the superstructure to become river blockhouses! These could, if the information is followed carefully, be modelled from a Peter Pig 1/600 monitor or 1/1200 type with little difficulty. There are three of the small Swedish monitor types in the list: *Selve*, *Foelke* and *Fenris*, as well as the bigger standard Ericsson type. The last named of which I wrote about in *Battlefleet* a while ago, as a simple 'Pig' conversion of the *Passaic* type. At least one of the small Swedish ironclads was intended to fight stern first, as a means to protect retreating warships in the Baltic archipelago systems.

These are unusual models to find anywhere, and that is more that true of the Spanish monitor type *Puigceda* which it is very difficult to find an illustration of anywhere! Then the Russian *Smersh*, another oddity, and the same goes for the 'Paper Shipwright' Dutch *Tijger*, which if I recall had a ram bow; Holland being the only country to place this feature on a monitor—remarkably useful in narrow waterways. The *Melik*, the Egyptian Nile gunboat, can I think be converted in many smaller scales without too much trouble, and the Danish *Pedar Skram* is available, but at a cost, in 1/1200! So is the new model of the HMVS *Cerebrus*, and *Huascar* and the two RN monitors, *M15* and *M33*. There are also three ACW models, the original USS *Monitor* and the CSS *Virginia*, and a mortar boat. Several of these interesting models, including the *Rhein* and *Mosel*, are available as free downloads, and the technical information supplied is well worth reading, too. Incidentally, the company also manufactures a number of rather complex paper merchant vessels, two Martello Towers and some sea walls.

PS13b

PAPER SHIPWRIGHT

1:250 Scale
Card Model

SMS Rhein/Mosel

Germany, 1872



Model Designed by David Hathaway

Paper Shipwright
28 Hayster Drive
Cambridge
CB1 9PB

www.papershipwright.co.uk
info@papershipwright.co.uk

Length: 22m
Width: 3m
Height: 4m

2 Sheets DIN A4
224 pieces

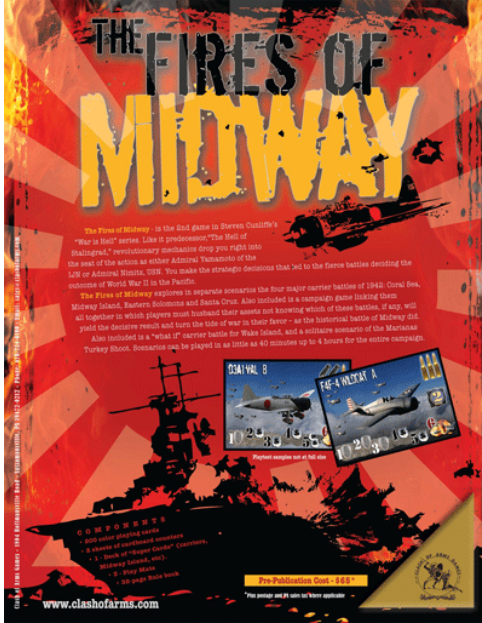
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Skill rating: Intermediate

The paper modelling concept is alive and well in Eastern Europe of course, many of my colleagues in Poland and the Ukraine are addicted to it, and I believe it is 'big' in Germany as well, but it never really had much of start here. I'm not actually interested in them as paper kits; they are far too specialised and oddly scaled as models and also too time consuming for me! Rather it is the fact that someone like David Hathaway has prepared accurate scale plans which could be used not in 1/250 or in 1/160 but transposed to a real wargame scale like 1/600, 1/1200 or even 1/2400 for the tabletop. That is either by scratch building and conversion, which is possibly worth considering, or by the efforts of a sculptor and manufacturer of naval models—and many do read this newsletter, I know. The *Rhein* monitor 'sunk' version is going to be easy to re-create in 1/300 and in many of the other wargames scales I think, but the others might need a little effort, and so I'll put some thought into it shortly.

What appeals to me most about David Hathaway's work is its sense of adventure and his highly original thought process. Who anywhere makes a Rhine monitor in metal that you can see without a magnifying glass? Take a look!!!

THE FIRES OF MIDWAY



The Fires of Midway - is the 2nd game in Steven Cunliffe's "War is Hell" series. Like its predecessor, "The Hell of Stalingrad", revolutionary mechanics drop you right into the seat of action as either Admiral Yamamoto of the IJN or Admiral Nimitz, USN. You make the strategic decisions that lead to the fierce battles deciding the outcome of World War II in the Pacific.

The Fires of Midway explores in separate scenarios the four major carrier battles of 1942: Coral Sea, Midway Island, Eastern Solomons and Santa Cruz. Also included is a campaign game linking them all together in which players must husband their assets not knowing which of these battles, if any, will yield the decisive result and turn the tide of war in their favor - as the historical battle of Midway did. Also included is a "what if" carrier battle for Wake Island, and a solitaire scenario of the Marianas Turkey Shoot. Scenarios can be played in as little as 40 minutes, up to 4 hours for the entire campaign.

Components: 32-page Rule Book; 3 Play Mats; 200 Colour Playing Card; 2 Sheets of Cardboard Counters; 1 Deck of 'Super Cards', carriers, Midway Island, etc.

Pre-publication Price: \$65.00 (plus postage and PA sales tax where applicable)

(See www.clashofarms.com)

SOCIETY OF NAUTICAL RESEARCH NEWS.

Rob Morgan

The winter edition of the Newsletter of the Society of Nautical Research, *The Mariner's Mirror*, has some news of a couple of interesting events. The World Ship Society's annual 'Naval Meeting' will be held on Saturday June 5th 2010 at the Hawthorne Hotel in Bristol, and will include a lecture by Professor Eric Grove on the battleship revolution in the late 1800s. There will also be a talk on RN destroyers and anti-aircraft gunnery from 1930-1970, another on the Liverpool class cruiser HMS *Manchester*, and a third talk by Dr. Malcolm Cooper on Japanese submarines of WWII. The day runs from 10.30-1700 and further information is available from Richard Osborne at dorborne@blueyonder.co.uk.

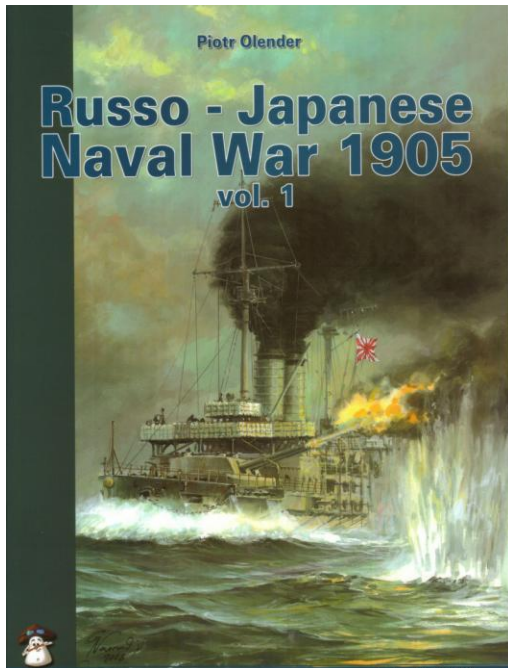
Some regions of the SNR are able to run their own programmes, and SNR South holds monthly meetings at the Royal Naval Club in Pembroke Road, Old Portsmouth. The April 10th meeting, which starts at 1400, has a talk on fireships and another on reconstructing the action of Basque Roads, which is described as intended to 'expand on the demonstration held at the recent 200th Anniversary Conference at the RNM'. This sounds a like a wargame to me! Details of the meeting are available from Peter Ashley at peter.ashley4@btinternet.com.

RUSSO-JAPANESE NAVAL WAR 1905
VOL. 1
PIOTR OLENDER

MUSHROOM MODEL PUBLICATIONS
MARITIME SERIES No 3101
(ISBN 978-83-89450-48-7)

Richard Wimpenny

This is one of those books that must have been written with the naval wargamer in mind. From the atmospheric painting of the *Mikasa* on the cover, through its 152 pages, this A4 soft-back is packed with information, charts, tables and photographs that are tailor-made for men of our ilk. The book is well laid out, with its twenty-nine punchy chapters focusing on various episodes of the campaign around Port Arthur. Many of these chapters, such as 'The Battle of Chelumpo', or 'The Sinking of the Battleship *Petropavlovsk*', are scenarios in waiting, with maps and orders of battle already prepared.



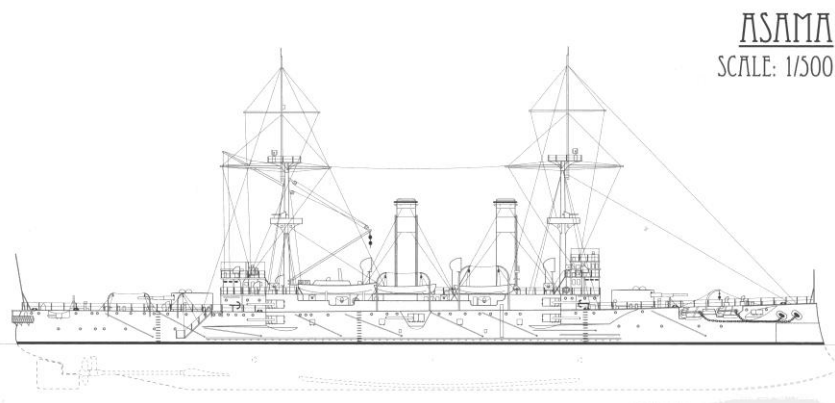
Perhaps my favourite feature of Olander's book is the wealth of black and white photographs, many of which I had never seen before. I found those showing the interior of some of the Russian forts around Port Arthur particularly interesting, while one of a listing *Varyag* at Chelumpo is highly atmospheric. Technical and hardware subjects aside, there are also photographs of the various commanders, which puts a human face on this very 'ironclad' war. And while pictures of Togo and Rozhstvensky abound in any book on the RJW, I had never seen any of Rear-Admiral Togo (no relation to the 'great man') or Rear-Admiral Nikolai Rejcenshtein, the commander of the Russian cruisers at the Battle of the Yellow Sea; yet here they are, along with many others.

Despite '1905' featuring so prominently in the title, this volume deals exclusively with the campaign leading to the fall of Port Arthur, and is, therefore, aside from the final chapter, *wholly devoted to events in 1904!* Consequently, if you're looking for information on Tsushima, you will have to wait for the forthcoming Volume II, due out next month. Hopefully, this next offering will also cover the activities of the Vladivostok Squadron, something that is curiously lacking in Volume I.

One of the other slight oddities of the book is the prose style. This is not a well-written book, if you know what I mean, the text being a trifle 'lumpy' at times; although to be fair, the original was (I think) in Polish!

Great work of literature this book may not be, but it is still packed with information, maps and data tables. One of the most useful maps is of the main theatre of operations, which covers Manchuria, Korea and south-west Japan, complete with all the period names so lacking on most modern maps; it's just a shame there isn't a more detailed one of the Yellow Sea area, too. The 'Battle of the Yellow Sea' itself is dealt with in two separate chapters, and the tack charts of this often confusing battle are clear and easy to follow. Furthermore, there is a table of all the Russian guns that had been removed from Vitgeft's ships to bolster the defences of Port Arthur; an important consideration for any re-fight of the battle. Incidentally, the tables included in *Russo-Japanese War 1905* are definitely one of the high points for all of us 'number-crunchers' and 'rivet-counters', with such delights as 'Register of Torpedo Attacks During the Port Arthur Campaign', 'Hits on Russian Ships During the Bombardment of Port Arthur by Japanese Land Artillery' and 'Russian Mining Operations at Port Arthur'—all highly interesting and useful to boot. Statistics aside, this book is pleasing to the eye throughout, and there are beautiful 1/500 scale drawings of all the Japanese battleships and cruisers, with smaller vessels rendered in a slightly larger 1/350. I assume that corresponding illustrations of the Russian fleet will appear in Volume II.

ARMORED CRUISERS



ASAMA

SCALE: 1/500

(Not to scale,
by the way!
The original
takes up a
page of A4.)

All in all, I would say that *Russo-Japanese War 1905* is a useful book for anyone wanting to wargame this most fascinating of naval conflicts; just *how* useful will depend on what other sources you already possess, but it is definitely worth a look. However, I have no doubt that it will set the pulses racing of at least some of our 'pre-dreadnought' members!

NWS Events and Regional Contacts, 2009

NWS Northern Fleet – Falkirk East Central Scotland

Kenny Thomson, 1 Excise Lane, Kincardine, Fife, FK10 4LW, Tel: 01259 731091

e-mail: kenny.thomson@homecall.co.uk - 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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-

NWS North Hants [Every 3rd Sunday]

Jeff Crane 31 Park Gardens, Black Dam, Basingstoke, Hants, 01256 427906

e-mail: gf.crane@ntlworld.com

NWS Wessex [Bi-Monthly Meetings]

The Wessex Group has gone into (hopefully) temporary abeyance for the moment. If anyone living in the Bath / Bristol / Gloucester area (or further afield) would like to take on managing the group please contact myself or any of the other NWS officials.
