



All Guns Blazing!

Newsletter of the Naval Wargames Society

No. 226 – AUGUST 2013

EDITORIAL

I know at least two people spotted the deliberate mistake in July's AGB. The Explosion weekend was in June of course, not July. There are no prizes for spotting the occasional, cunningly hidden deliberate error; just give yourself three cheers and a pat on the back. And as Shaw Taylor* used to say, "Keep 'em peeled". (Revealing my age now).

Don't forget to send in your articles formatted in Times New Roman font size 12 and photographs for "Battlefleet" to chorney.jeff@gmail.com

These sites of interest are from Robert Langlois

<http://www.tf4m.com/mystery-ship/>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monge_%28A601%29

Robert also is working on a Convoy/Escort/U-Boat Game which hopefully can be serialised in a couple of AGBs soon. It could inspire you to produce some rules of your own, as let's face it; those shop bought rules always contain something that we are not quite happy with.

Another site of interest could be www.nam.ac.uk/unseen-enemy no; it is not about submarines but improvised explosive devices from a clockwork device in Ludgate Railway Station in 1884 up to present day Afghanistan. If you visit a Museum or somewhere else of interest, please produce a few words, hopefully positive, for inclusion in AGB. If you can match Bruce Dawson's effort for July's AGB, that will be great.

Cheers
Norman Bell
normanpvc@gmail.com

*Shaw Taylor presented "Police 5", which predates "Crimewatch" by more years than I care to think about.

NAVAL WARGAMING POST WWII. The scale of the problem.

If you are lucky you may have access to a table tennis size table but most will have to make do with a regular dining table as a playing area. With big guns, aircraft, helicopters and missiles increasing the range of battles, just how do you represent great distances on a dining table? Hex mapboards or more likely mapsheets these days, with each hex representing many miles may be one solution but the maps in Victory Game's 2nd Fleet (Modern Naval Combat in the North Atlantic dating from 1986) are bigger than my dining table. Consequently the game does not get played. The Explosion Museum Naval Games weekend included a cold war Mediterranean battle with a novel way of showing Task Forces that in reality would be many miles away. If you have any ideas or suggestions please let me know.

Norman Bell.

“ROMAN WARSHIPS”...Michael Pitassi. Boydell & Brewer. 2012.

Hb... £50. pp190. ISBN 978-1-84333-610-0

A while ago, I reviewed Pitassi's 'Navies of Rome' here in 'All Guns Blazing' and my only quibble was that I felt it should be read with another book alongside, preferably an illustrated volume dealing specifically with ship types'

This is that book!

Briefly, the text deals with sources of Roman warships, the literature, iconography and archaeology, and it's interpretation. A more complex section deals with oar systems.

At this point, moving to Chapter 3, the real value for the wargamer begins! The list of 'ship's fittings' examined and dealt with is extensive, and very useful indeed; the ram, artillery and towers, sailing and rig, even boarding devices and techniques are considered. However, it is the ship types which are examined and explained more specifically and succinctly here than in any other volume I've ever encountered.

He begins with the earliest types, from the 8th to 4th centuries BC All with a plan and elevation to scale! A modeller's dream, and a volume which I hope will inspire several manufacturers. Here's an Etruscan monoreme of 30 oars, a Greek and Etruscan Pentekonter, Greek and Etruscan Biremes, and an early Trireme are also described and illustrated.

Pitassi moves on to deal with the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC Here come the bigger vessels. The heavily armed 'Sexteres', and the Quinqueremes of early and later types, Quadrireme and less well-known types the early Bireme *Liburna*, the *Pristis* and *Celox*. Excellent stuff. Next he deals with the first centuries BC and AD, busy times for the Romans. Here Triremes, Biremes and Liburnians, with the different stern types are here, at least two hull or design variants of each; and as in the case of all the ships described in the text, crew numbers and roles, and dimensions and interpretations too. This section includes an explanation and drawings of a 'Scout' vessel (this would look good in 6mm or even 15mm) as well as a number of auxiliary river craft, some of the *Classis Panninica*, remarkably small craft in a few cases.

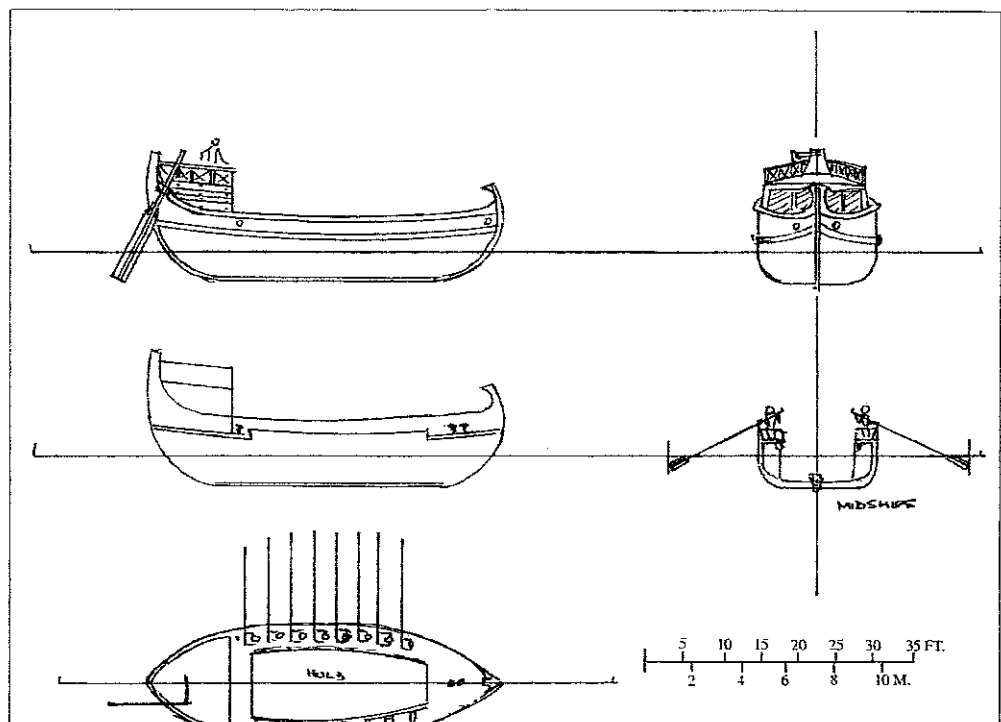
Following on, the height of Imperial power, the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. Trajan's ships, from Trajan's column to begin with; the River Liburna of the *Classis Moesica*, a robust looking warship and the seagoing variant too, and well known Trajanian Trireme. Pitassi includes here the standard military river transport of the period, and this is shown in the illustration. I think it could be easily converted into 1/600th scale from the old 1/1200th Skytrex Greek merchantman model. More easily modelled small craft end the chapter.

Rome's declining naval power in the 4th and 5th centuries AD come next. Starting with a delightful Rhine Patrol Boat of 22 oars. Here too the warships of the *Classis Britannica*, along with an interesting river craft, a Lusoria, a Roman raider! As well as a Scapha light warship, and a rowed military transport, which I felt could be quickly converted into 1/600th using the Skytrex Saxon ship model. The section ends with a really late Roman warship, one of unusual design, almost a 'pre-dromon'!

The bibliography is much shorter than I anticipated and few of the titles listed will be new to naval or ancient wargamers, all date to the last forty years or so.

I have kept the most interesting aspect of the book (at least as far as naval wargamers and ship modellers are concerned) to last. Not only are there dozens of drawings, but twenty five pages of superb colour plates. Many of these are photographs of accurate scale models, most of them waterline, detailed crewed and looking set to grace a wargamers table-top! The two photos of a pair of patrol ships on the Rhine c. AD 250-300 have certainly set my little grey cells working if I can find a base model to work from. These are splendid additions to a very valuable book indeed.

Rob Morgan.



Look What I Found!

Nothing spectacular in this case, but I often encounter odd items which are of interest to wargamers, we all do, but for the most part they go unrecorded, the information lost rather than passed on. I'm not suggesting that the NWS should, or even could, create what the much larger, and far more affluent Castle Studies Group produces- an annual compendium of books, articles and material on it's subject- far too large a matter. But it would be useful to all of us if we as members actually shared what we encounter, or even are 'desperately seeking'! In that case, since you ask, I'm looking for a 1/600th scale ACW warship USS Galena, and a CSS Baltic in the same scale. No? Ah, well.

I found myself in the old extra-mural library the other evening, waiting for my daughter. I had the chance to scan the shelves, and found a number of magazines on 'classical matters'. One of them, *'MINERVA'* looked interesting. Published in English, in the UK with a 'world-wide' distribution, the cover of the newest issue attracted me. I found myself looking through the pile of recent issues, one or two of which had useful nautical material. In the May/ June 2010 issue there's a splendid article, pages 16-19, entitled *'Ship of the People'*. Written by James Beresford, this is a very readable short appraisal of the Greek Trireme. Nicely illustrated too.

There are a couple of nice points made, he suggests that much of the push for Athens' democracy came from the 30,000+ oarsmen of the triremes, who demanded recognition for their efforts, while his comments on the narrowness and light construction of Athenian warships, which meant only four bowmen and ten marine hoplites could be carried on the top deck, also meant that the hoplites were trained to throw javelins from a sitting position in order not to knock the boat. There's a hands-on piece of practical research for re-enactors there. Beresford mentions a book I've not seen, but he regards as being of value; *'Lords of the Sea'* by John Hale (Viking Press 2009). Does anyone know that book?

Rob Morgan.

An Odd Naval Weapon.

The other day I had the opportunity to look at John Campbell's "*Naval Weapons of WWII*" a comprehensive volume, first published by Conway's in the mid 1980's. In the section on British weapons, he mentions two unusual weapons carried aboard light craft, as well as the rifle calibre machine guns, some of which, like the Lewis were to say the least of significant age!

First, the 0.55" Boys anti-tank rifle, which he says was carried by many minesweeping craft for the purpose of destroying mines floating on the surface. The Boys, considered by many army sources to be an unpopular weapon because of its very heavy recoil 'kick', was of course quite capable of this task. It would have made an interesting addition to the armament of a Royal Navy Drifter! It could also have been used offensively, a hit on an enemy gun might have a significant effect, and the Soviets of course used them for sniping on many an occasion!

The other weapon, of which Campbell says some 300 were made for the use of harbour defence craft, was the 1" (25.4mm) Elswick 'C' Rifle, a development of an army target rifle, mounted aboard ships on a four-leg mounting capable of a forty degree elevation. He says it was originally a conversion of a 1" Nordenfeldt barrel. I can find no mention of, nor find an illustration of this weapon, what did it actually look like mounted, and what was its use? There were all sorts of odd devices in use during the war, from RN Holman steam projectors firing a/a grenades, to vertical flamethrowers on some Kriegsmarine vessels, so perhaps a big target rifle should be no surprise, but why?

Rob Morgan.

“WARGAMES:- From Gladiators to Gigabytes.”

Martin Van Creveld. Cambridge University Press. 2013.

320pp...Pb. £17.99. ISBN:-978-1-107-68442-3.

I wondered what I'd find when I picked this book up- newly arrived, and a review copy at that. A fascinating book, very broad in what it covers. Yet it has a value for every wargamer, in any society or club, and gaming in any period, on land, air or at sea or elsewhere.

It's a tale of how, why and where. From the concepts of hunting, and of combat sport, and indeed of the 'combat of champions', to the war games of Emperors and Gladiators. The author moves on, to the medieval concept of 'trial by combat'; the rise and fall of the Tournament and indeed the slow development of the duel up to modern times is dealt with.

The early board war games, chess and the introduction of miniatures by the Prussian father and son team von Reisswitz in Bonaparte's time are dealt with, and this is a long section which thoroughly, and I do mean thoroughly examines the splendid, effective German developments in war games during the '*Kriegspiel*' era. Until I read this volume, the detail of the legendary *Militar-Wochensblatt* of Prussia, publishing a weekly wargame scenario from the 1820's onwards, was little more than a whisper of possibility. In this section of the book there's a must-read chapter entitled 'By the Throw of the Dice'. Here the book broadens slightly to the political-military games of the twentieth century states, but is interesting nevertheless.

By the way, few pages in this book go without a note or a reference on a volume, article or magazine linked to the subject. This is superbly well written material. Yes, the development of naval wargames are to be found in the pages of the book, and plenty of material on the subject too. This is a book about all wargaming, not just naval, but it is worth reading from the point of view of the sea.

Some of the information on military and naval manoeuvres especially in the run up to 1914, and between the Great Wars was delightful, in one or two places it was hard not to laugh out loud! This section is entitled 'Toil & Sweat (But no Blood!)'. On the book goes, and I wondered at this point if anyone amongst our readership has encountered a 'best selling' volume entitled "*A Handbook of Infantry Tactics for Paintball*"? Setting the potential outcomes aside, this might

be worth a glance. I wondered if it owed anything to Rommel's classic on the subject? Van Creveld also deals very neatly with re-enactment and re-enactors, who are wargamers after all.

The section 'Enter the Computer' dealing with post-1945 wargame developments, that's both historical and contemporary games of course, is to my mind not the best of Van Creveld's text, but its facts and its accuracy are not to be denied. Incidentally, as far as wargames reads are concerned, the author mentions one book 'Ender's Game' by Orson Scott Card (1977) which is perhaps the ultimate computer war game book-so far published, but space ships not warships.

This is a superb all-embracing book on the world's second oldest pastime. I won't call it a hobby! I recommend it to every one of you. My only criticism is that though there are vast footnotes and comments on most pages, and ample references, there's no Bibliography. That's a shame, as it would or could have presented a vast canon of written work on games of war, and a canon developed and published over centuries, and not just about the fleet or the 20th century!

'Fire Discipline'.

I've been wading through my piles of forty-odd year old 'AIRFIX Magazines' looking for an article which I still can't find, on Alamein. I found this though. Now the letter pages of that venerable publication often contained gems of information, and this cropped up in a letter in June 1967.

E.E.Woods of Cosham, I'm not sure where that is, complained about the art work on the new (then) 1/600th scale kit of *HMS Nelson*. The box showed the Battleship firing her guns on the centre line, which says E.E.Woods '*would have nearly split her in two.*' He goes on to say that '*the last time this was tried was in 1917 in the *Courageous*, and since then it was forbidden.*'

Was there a specific order in that regard? If so, what were the angles of fire prohibited? Of course, naval encounters between big warships being rare events, unless you're a naval wargamer, the opportunity to get a good broadside in against an enemy light might outweigh the risks? Or would it? In the relatively few capital ship duels I've gamed the point has never emerged, but should there be a rule to deal with this prohibition? I'm assuming that this was purely a Royal Navy fighting instruction following some serious incident aboard *Courageous* in 1917. Or was it found in German, Italian and other major navies?

Rob Morgan.

Rockets at Sea.

I was glancing at a copy of the 1952 Navy Records Society *The Naval Miscellany IV* in the History Faculty stack the other afternoon. In it, Messrs Lloyd & Craig considered 'Congreve's Rockets' in Royal Naval service during the Napoleonic Wars. They focussed on the period from 1805 to 1809, when these projectiles were in vogue, and William Congreve himself was around to promote them, though Admiral Keith the Channel fleet commander was it seems rather more sceptical. Nelson however, supported the idea of rocket bombardment of the enemy fleets, right up to Trafalgar.

There was apparently, a plan to destroy the allied fleets at Cadiz by rocket fire in 1804, and in the bombardment of Boulogne in October 1806, as many as 400 rockets were fired. Rockets were sent to the Dardanelles in 1807 for use in forcing the narrows, and were used at Copenhagen the same year. Cochrane it seems was enthusiastic about them, and he employed Congreve's little missiles in the Battle at Aix Roads in 1809; while they were regularly used against French shore targets during the Peninsular War. The Congreve rockets were used until around 1860, but generally by the army. They were certainly employed in the Crimean War, and later in the American Civil War, but I can't find any mention of them afloat in that conflict.

The authors of this small chapter provide substantial information of interest to the wargamer; though we are I suspect all familiar with the illustrations of single rocket frames aboard ships boats and small craft, but this piece gives details of the equipment carried on board sailing warships in Napoleon's Wars.

The rockets were of 24lb and 32lb weight, and the range is given as around 3,000 yards. During the period 1805-6, when the interest was at it's zenith, around thirty or so warships were rocket equipped. A number of 38's, HMS's Clyde and Naiad among them, some 9 Sloops, including HMS's Kangaroo, Kite and Mosquito. Lastly seventeen Gun Brigs, including HMS's Archer, Bloodhound, Fancy and Bold.

The 38's were given 4 rocket frames, and 12 boxes of 6 24pdr rockets, which provides a decent amount of firepower. The Sloops had only 2 frames with 8 boxes of 6 24pdr rockets each. While the Gun Brigs had 3 frames, and 8 boxes of rockets. I've never used them in any wrgame, though I do like small boat actions and a French sortie to take out a group of the annoying RN small rocket boats might be interesting, as might be their use to tempt out a few larger sitting ducks!

TYPE 26 FRIGATE

Due to arrive from 2021 onwards, the Type 26 Global Combat Ships will be the workhorses of the future Royal Navy, replacing the existing Type 23 Frigates. Right now there's an 80-strong team of naval and civilian engineers working on the designs in Bristol. By the mid-2030s the Type 26 will be the backbone and workhorse of the Royal Navy.



Iron Duke back at sea after major upgrade

Portsmouth-based HMS Iron Duke has returned to sea after a 16-month upgrade and now boasts one of the world's most advanced radar systems.



HMS Iron Duke sails from Portsmouth

[Picture: [Leading Airman \(Photographer\) Maxine Davies](#), Crown copyright]

The Type 23 frigate is the first Royal Navy ship to be fitted with Artisan – a 3D radar 5 times better than the old version it replaces.

Iron Duke has left Portsmouth to begin an intensive period of sea trials.

As part of a £100 million programme, [Artisan](#) (advanced radar, target indication, situational awareness and navigation) will be fitted to all the Navy's 13 Type 23s as well as the 2 future aircraft carriers. The Type 23's replacement, the [Type 26 Global Combat Ship](#), may also carry the system when it enters service next decade.

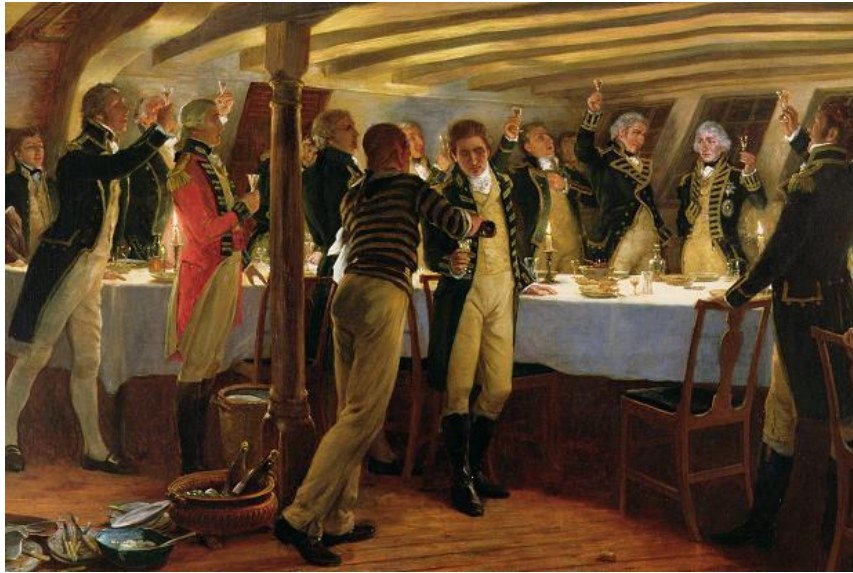
Artisan boasts some impressive statistics. It can spot something as small as a cricket or tennis ball travelling at 3 times the speed of sound more than 25 kilometres away.

Built from the same lightweight carbon glass fibre materials found on a Formula 1 racing car, Artisan weighs just 700 kilograms.

The system can track up to 800 moving targets simultaneously, whether they are 200 metres or 200 kilometres away from the ship. Using Artisan, [Iron Duke](#) could sit in her home base, in Portsmouth, and simultaneously follow aircraft

flying into Heathrow, Gatwick, Southampton, Stansted, Bournemouth, Bristol, Cardiff, Exeter and Birmingham airports. With advanced anti-jamming features, Artisan is not affected by interference from 10,000 mobile phone signals, and can pick out targets against a background of electronic noise and interference. Iron Duke's upgrade, carried out by BAE Systems in Portsmouth, also included work on her other weapons systems and combat computer. In addition, improvements to her ventilation mean she is able to operate more efficiently in hot climates.

Rob Morgan and I both saw the following news item.



A naval toast in HMS Elephant the day before the Battle of Copenhagen in 1801
bridgemanart.com

FOR decades the Royal Navy has recited the same toasts before formal dinners.

But now, in a bid to bring the navy into the 21st century, and address the fact that women also serve in the forces, two of them have been changed. The Ministry of Defence said naval officers would no longer raise their glasses on a Saturday and toast 'our wives and sweethearts' – usually met with the unofficial reply 'may they never meet'. Instead an instruction by the Second Sea Lord Vice-Admiral David Steel has modified it to say 'our families'.



Sailors make a toast on a submarine in 1940

The change has been put down to the fact there have now been women at sea for more than two decades. A second toast made on Tuesday nights has also been changed from 'our men' to 'our sailors'.

But not everyone welcomes the changes. Mike Critchley is a former naval officer and book publisher, from Gosport. He said: 'I see the whole thing as unnecessary. 'It's a bit of a storm in a teacup; the navy doesn't go around toasting everybody. 'It's a reflection of political correctness, and if that's considered important, then that's what it is. 'The navy has moved forward and doesn't host as many dinners like it used to.'

A spokesman for the Ministry of Defence said: 'To reflect cultural changes and our modern and inclusive navy, two of the naval toasts used at mess dinners have been updated. 'The Royal Navy values the diversity and range of its personnel, and it is only right that its traditional toasts should reflect the fact women have been at sea for more than 20 years.'

Although women have served at sea since 1990, it was only last year when the first woman was made commander of a frontline Royal Navy warship. The navy has traditional toasts for every night of the week. But such toasts are mainly made during large celebratory dinners or when a ship has anchored – not every day.

The toasts are now as follows:

Sunday: 'Absent friends'.

Monday: 'Our ships at sea'.

Tuesday: 'Our sailors'.

Wednesday: 'Ourselves (as no-one else is likely to concern themselves with our welfare)'.

Thursday: 'A bloody war or a sickly season'.

Friday: 'A willing foe and sea-room'.

Saturday: 'Our families'.

It's been a busy few weeks at Devonport as a submarine and three ships all returned home to their base-port and to families and friends after many months away.

It was the end of a record-breaking patrol for nuclear sub *HMS Trenchant*; back after 11 months away, with 267 days spent east of Suez. Operating under joint command, *HMS Trenchant* has completed several periods of national tasking and contributed to NATO operations against terrorism and counter-narcotics. During her time away, *HMS Trenchant* visited Fujairah in the UAE, Diego Garcia, Bahrain, Jordan, Crete and Gibraltar - a deployment spanning some 38,800 nautical miles, spending over 4700 hours underwater. The crew have consumed over 34,000 eggs, almost 8000 litres of milk with the chefs cooking over 103,000 meals! Commanding Officer, Commander Irvine Lindsay praised his crew, saying, "Whilst I am enormously proud of the achievements of my ship's company, I do not believe they are a unique body of men. I am convinced that the resilience, dedication, professional pride and sheer grit demonstrated by this ship's company are indicative of the high calibre of personnel serving across the whole of the submarine service and indeed the Royal Navy". The crew are now looking forward to a well-deserved period of leave while *HMS Trenchant* prepares for a two-year maintenance period.

Joining *HMS Trenchant* back in Devonport was Type 23 "Duke Class" Frigate *HMS Monmouth*, back after seven months in the Arabian Gulf, putting another 53,000 miles on the clock and while away, celebrating her 20th year of service.

Type 23 Frigate HMS Northumberland, also back after seven months away in the Middle-East and east coast of Africa carrying out counter-piracy and counter-narcotics operations. Boarding teams carried out over 70 boarding operations, one of which resulted in the capture of cannabis resin with an estimated street value of £5.5m. During her deployment *Northumberland* visited 11 countries, completing over 45,000 miles.

Survey ship *HMS Enterprise* returned to base after nine months away, also in the Middle-East, during which time she surveyed over 1,220km², or the equivalent of 170,000 football pitches and discovered two uncharted wrecks within Dubai's Port Rashid Harbour.

The History of Wargaming Project and Naval Wargaming by John Curry.

I played the Fletcher Pratt naval wargaming rules over the years and did some work on the rules. For example, I created a program to create the ship cards needed to play the game. Sometimes, when I mentioned the Pratt rules (and the fact I had modified them), I was asked for a copy. John B. and Tony Hawkins advised me to try and sell some copies of the rules. So I produced a fairly amateur version, which to my surprise sold.

Over a year or so I started to proof read the rules, improve the layout and got the rules printed and bound cheaply by a local printer. Thus started the history of wargaming library project. Rather than just reproduce the originals, I decided to try to make the rules usable for a modern audience. The Fred Jane Naval Rules had an excellent fast play version in them (which allows a novice to quickly get into a game). The book was produced casually and really needed further work, but as I thought 10 copies would sell, and I would know 6 of the purchasers, I thought it was not worth the effort. I was a little surprised to find that when the *Fred Jane Naval Wargame (1906) including the Royal Navy Wargaming Rules* sold 11 copies; I knew none of the buyers.

My next naval wargaming was the classic *Donald Featherstone's Naval Wargame*. This was the book that did more to launch modern naval wargaming than any other. Its key feature was re-introducing the Fred Jane and Fletcher Pratt Naval Wargame, as well as simple naval rules by Tony Bath for ancient ship battles.

I realised that the version of the Fletcher Pratt game we all used was incomplete. It lacked a campaign system, examples of scenarios and rules updates that I knew existed. So over a year I set about tracing the owner of the Pratt game and she did have several boxes of previously unpublished stuff. *The Fletcher Pratt Naval Wargame* was a new book, full of additional material. I was also surprised to find that Pratt's loyal fan base were eager to buy the book, not to play the game, but to learn more about Pratt.

When I did *Phil Dunn's Sea Battles revised edition* he offered me new material for a couple of chapters and then Paddy Griffith (a big fan of Dunn's book) offered a 'Hunt the Bismarck Game' as an appendix. The additional material added to the book and I was amazed that the book apparently launched several hundred solo naval wargaming campaigns.

Several other books have included naval wargaming material. Innovations in wargaming included a naval kriegspiel by Paddy Griffith; Bruce Quarries Napoleonic Campaigns in Miniature had a chapter on sea battles.

One advantage of being editor is the ability to commission more naval wargaming books. The next to go to print is *Phil Dunn's Fury at Sea*, which is full of ideas for large scale simple naval wargames. Also included will be the Napoleonic naval rules of the Sandhurst Wargaming Club, written by Paddy Griffith and David Chandler at this semi-legendary club.

The project will include more naval wargaming material, with at least two more books on the subject (in addition to Phil Dunn's) over the next 12 months.

HMS DRAGON works with US carrier group

31/07/2013

A Royal Navy warship has been working alongside one of the US Navy's mighty aircraft carriers in the Gulf of Oman.



A seaman on HMS DRAGON watches US naval units of Carrier Air Wing 11 replenishing at sea
[Picture: Leading Airman (Photographer) Dave Jenkins, Crown copyright]

The Type 45 destroyer **HMS DRAGON** joined the USS Nimitz and her carrier battle group as they conducted maritime security operations and offered support to US forces involved in Operation Enduring Freedom.

DRAGON and her ship's company spent several days working with the battle group, providing air defence and allowing the crew to get used to operating with lots of aircraft in the vicinity.

The sheer range of aircraft encountered by the Royal Navy contingent during this period was far from usual: flying about in the skies above the ships were F/A-18E/F Super Hornets and F/A-18C Hornet strike fighters; EA-6B Prowlers, for electronic warfare; E-2C Hawkeyes, used for airborne early warning; C-2 Greyhounds, used for logistics; and a helicopter anti-submarine squadron of SH-60F and HH-60H Seahawks.

Key to making order out of this controlled aerial chaos was one of DRAGON's fighter controllers, Flying Officer David Bowl, an RAF officer embarked on DRAGON for her deployment. It was his job to ensure that the skies were a safe place to be and that the carrier battle group was provided with an understanding of everything that was in the air surrounding the battle group.



United States Marines fast-rope onto HMS DRAGON's deck during an exercise
[Picture: Crown copyright]

DRAGON also practised some special ship manoeuvres and set pieces that are only applicable when working with a carrier operating fast jets at sea, including acting as a 'horizon reference' for incoming aircraft – standing off about 4,000 yards astern of the mighty carrier and adopting a special lighting configuration to help guide pilots onto the Nimitz's flight deck.

These operations provide essential experience for a new generation of sailors who will be working with new aircraft carriers HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales, which will operate F-35 Lightning II fast jets and are due to enter service in a few years' time.

Members of DRAGON's crew also took the chance to pay a visit to the Nimitz, spending time on board and being given a taste of life on a fully-operational supercarrier as a glimpse of things to come when the Queen Elizabeth Class ships join the Royal Navy's fleet.



US Navy supercarrier USS Nimitz

[Picture: Leading Airman (Photographer) Dave Jenkins, Crown copyright]

HMS DRAGON will now return to the Gulf to continue maintaining Britain's interests in the region. There, she will work closely with Gulf Cooperation Council members to develop an understanding of the intricate patterns of life in this complex region.

As the UK Government moves from releasing papers after 30 years to release after 20 years, we now get two releases a year. The following was released on 1st August.

'WWIII Queen's speech', script revealed



The Queen was expected to urge Britons to pray and remain united and resolute in the event of the "madness" of nuclear war, papers from 1983 show. The script for a hypothetical broadcast has the monarch describing the threat to the "brave country" as "greater" than any other in history. It also mentions the Queen's son Prince Andrew, then in the Royal Navy.

The speech, devised by Whitehall officials at one of the most fraught Cold War periods, was never recorded.

The document, released by the government **under the 30-year rule**, was drawn up as part of a war-gaming exercise in the spring of 1983, which worked through potential scenarios. Although it was only a simulation, the text of the Queen's address - written as if broadcast at midday on Friday 4 March 1983 - seeks to prepare the country for the ordeal of World War III. The script, which starts off by referring to the Queen's traditional Christmas address, reads:

"The horrors of war could not have seemed more remote as my family and I shared our Christmas joy with the growing family of the Commonwealth. Now, this madness of war is once more spreading through the world and our brave country must again prepare itself to survive against great odds. I have never forgotten the sorrow and the pride I felt as my sister and I huddled around the nursery wireless set listening to my father's [George VI's] inspiring words on that fateful day in 1939 [at the start of the World War II]. Not for a single moment did I imagine that this solemn and awful duty would one day fall to me.

"But whatever terrors lie in wait for us all, the qualities that have helped to keep our freedom intact twice already during this sad century will once more be our strength."

Striking a personal note, the script continues:

"My husband and I share with families up and down the land the fear we feel for sons and daughters, husbands and brothers who have left our side to serve their country. My beloved son Andrew is at this moment in action with his unit and we pray continually for his safety and for the safety of all servicemen and women at home and overseas. It is this close bond of family life that must be our greatest defence against the unknown. If families remain united and resolute, giving shelter to those living alone and unprotected, our country's will to survive cannot be broken."

The speech concludes by saying the Queen's message to the nation was "simple".

'New evil'

It adds: "As we strive together to fight off the new evil, let us pray for our country and men of goodwill wherever they may be. God Bless you all".

In the war-gaming exercise, Orange bloc forces - representing the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies - launch a chemical weapon attack on the UK. Blue forces - representing NATO - retaliate with a "limited-yield" nuclear strike, forcing Orange to initiate a peace process. The exercise came in the year that US President Ronald Reagan both enraged and alarmed Moscow with his denunciation of the Soviet Union as the "evil empire", his plans for a "Star Wars" ballistic missile shield in space, and the deployment of US nuclear cruise missiles to Europe - including to RAF Greenham Common. Tensions increased when the Soviets shot down a South Korean airliner that strayed into their airspace, killing all 269 on board. A NATO military exercise, codenamed Able Archer, then nearly triggered an actual conflict with the Soviet leadership apparently convinced it was cover for a genuine attack.

The Soviet Union and the US later negotiated a reduction in the number of nuclear weapons, as the Cold War came to an end.

The crazy ideas which failed to solve the longitude problem

It was a complex conundrum which baffled 18th Century scientists and captivated the British public. How could sea navigation be made easier, by being able to accurately measure exact points east and west from a fixed meridian line?

For decades from 1714, experts and enthusiasts submitted their ideas to the Board of Longitude in the hope of winning a £20,000 prize - worth £1.5m in today's money.

Now, the full story of attempts to solve the longitude problem is available in Cambridge University's Digital Library - with documents and drawings online. Here - with Cambridge historian Professor Simon Schaffer - look at some of the ideas that failed, and the timepiece credited with providing the solution.

SIGNAL PAD!

3rd August. Claymore. The South East Scotland Wargames Club put on Scotland's Premier Wargame Show at Granton Campus, Edinburgh College. £2.50 – Children £1.50, family ticket £5. www.seswc.co.uk

10th/11th August. BRITCON. Free entry at Manchester UMIST, Barnes Wallace Building. British Historical Games Society www.bhgs.org.uk

11th August. Plastic Model and Wargaming Show. Thornberry Leisure Centre, South Gloucester. £4.50 – Children under 16 £2.00. IPMS Avon in association with Lincombe Barn Wargaming Society. www.ipmsavon.org.uk

Looking further to the future – September 14th – 15th. Colours. Newbury Racecourse. www.colours.org.uk
The NWS plan to put on a participation game.

13th October. South East London Wargames Show. Crystal Palace National Sports Centre. www.selwg.org

The Shows above are only some of the total out there. If you know of a wargames event let me know and I'll gladly include the details in AGB. If you go to one of these or any other show, how about sending in a few words of a review for All Guns Blazing? We have members in many countries, so you may have information of a show that is not readily available to me.

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, 2013

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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NWS North Hants [Every 3rd Sunday]

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

e-mail: gf.crane@ntlworld.com

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
