



All Guns Blazing!

Newsletter of the Naval Wargames Society

No. 276 – OCTOBER 2017

EDITORIAL

Many thanks for contributions to this month's AGB. All Members including newbies can write a few words to keep the standard up.

Navwar's website may not have all the whistles and bells of some model suppliers but their speed of delivery cannot be beaten. I sent a cheque off on Thursday for a few ships to bolster my Great War Starter Packs and everything arrived on the following Tuesday. O.K. overseas would be longer - well done to Navwar from this satisfied customer.

Welcome to new member John Watson.

Thanks to Chris Lambert for the Convoy AAR which is a separate document this month. And there is more to come in December!

Norman Bell.



“The times they are a-changing”.

'If my career were ahead instead of behind me, I should endeavour to the extent of my ability, and at the earliest opportunity, to acquire as thorough a knowledge of the principles of the art of war as possible, and should neglect no opportunity to train myself in their application by playing competitive wargames.'

US Admiral William Sims, 1919

The Royal Navy's Western Approaches Tactical Unit (WATU) operated between 1942 and 1945. WATU used wargaming to develop innovative tactics for dealing with U-boat attacks on convoys. WATU developed a basic set of wargame rules with processes to represent real-time decision cycles, tactical doctrine and communications realities. Players representing escort commanders could only see the gameplay through a restrictive screen to represent the limited information that they would have in a real battle and U-boat tracks were hidden from the players. The initial series of games undertook to evaluate how a U-boat might best approach a convoy during a night attack. These revealed the theory – that proved to be correct – that U-boats were not attacking from outside the perimeter of convoys, but were instead moving stealthily amongst the supply ships using their intended victims as cover.

The German Army used wargames in the interwar years to develop “mobile operations”. The rest of the World would call it “Blitzkrieg”. In 1927, the participants in one wargame included the following junior officers: von Prager, Adam, List, von Kluge, von Brauchitsch, von Witzleben, von Kleist, Kesselring, von Reichenau, von Manstein, Busch, Paulus, Guderian, Heinrici, von Arnim, von Mackensen, Matzky, Ott and Donitz.

Possible reading:

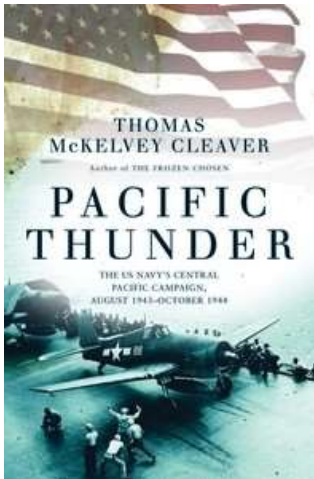
The Art of Wargaming by Peter Perla. 2nd Edition 2012.

Simulating War by Professor Phillip Sabin.

US Navy Fundamentals of War Gaming by Francis McHugh. Originally 1966 reprinted in 2013.

<http://www.wargaming.co/links/home.htm>

<http://www.wargaming.co/recreation/details/pdseabattles.htm>



An account of the Central Pacific campaign; one of the most stunning comebacks in naval history as in 14 months the US Navy went from the jaws of defeat to the brink of victory in the Pacific. Osprey Publishing expect to have this book available from the 19th October. In time to treat yourself for Christmas.

The UK Lottery is contributing £5 Million towards the restoration of the last D Day Landing Craft Tank (LCT). It has been salvaged from a half sunken state and will be restored to its wartime condition in time for the 75th anniversary of D Day in 2019. It will be displayed in Portsmouth's D Day Museum. The vessel was a floating nightclub in Liverpool before becoming a derelict.

The wreck of a sunken Great War U-Boat has been discovered off the coast of Belgium. There is damage to the bow and stern but the hatches are closed, indicating that the remains of 23 crew are inside. Belgium and Germany are deciding how to proceed. U-Boats sank some 5,000 ships carrying 13 million tons of cargo. 178 U-Boats were lost with 5,000 sailors.



The wreck is thought to be a UB-II type torpedo armed boat – 88ft long. It is the 11th U-Boat wreck found in Belgian waters.

During WWI, the German Navy used the Belgian port of Zeebrugge as a base for its submarines, to attack shipping in the North Sea. To combat the U-boat threat, the British tried to block Zeebrugge port in April 1918 by scuttling old ships in the entry channel.

The Quiz is as usual supplied from Rob Morgan's archives.

SEA QUIZ 66!

On we go, with a couple of tricky ones this month. (Yes, there were three British Admirals at Trafalgar. I 'wargamed' him once.)

1. Who were 'Jenny Graham's Novices'?

2. What did the 'Chester', 'Cressy', 'Drake' and 'Minotaur' Classes of Cruisers have in common?
3. What was the fate of SMS Kolberg in WWI?
4. Name the third British Admiral at Trafalgar, after Nelson and Collingwood.
5. The Battles of Lagos, Restigouche and the Windward Passage took place during which war?

A reminder of Quiz 65 Questions and then the Answers:

1. In 1914 the Russian ships Taimyr and Vaigach achieved what first?
2. The first modern Japanese Cruisers were named after what?
3. What were Acheron, Lonsdale and Childers in the 1880's?
4. What calibre gun was intended for the late WWI German L20 Battleships?
5. Russell, victor of La Hogue 1692 is alleged to have been the last what?

Answers:

SEA QUIZ 65...answers.

1. They made the northern passage from the Pacific to the Atlantic; both were ice breakers.
2. Interestingly, they were all named after Rivers! Tone, Yodo, Mogami, etc.
3. All three were Colonial Torpedo Vessels, for New South Wales and Victoria.
4. It was a hefty piece of 42cm. I wondered if any were ever manufactured.
5. He was (or so it was claimed) the last Admiral at Sea to wear armour... (!).

Well, I wondered exactly what wearing heavy plate on a quarterdeck would do for any commander, but it seems it all boiled down to a statue in Dartmouth. Any further comment might be interesting?

Jellico's first claim to fame was the Egyptian War of 1882. His leadership of the Naval Brigade during the Boxer Rebellion led to many honours from home and abroad including the Order of the Red Eagle from the Kaiser. Unfortunately he also carried a bullet in his lung for the rest of his life.

Beatty was a Captain at the age of 29 when the average age was 42. He was the youngest Rear Admiral since Nelson. He commanded a gunboat in support of Kitchener's Army in the 1890s and was awarded the DSO. During the Boxer Rebellion he was wounded by a bullet in his left arm which resulted in two paralysed fingers. (Could that be why the typical Beatty pose is with his hand in his pocket?)



Sailors and Marines launch an F/A-18C Hornet from the "Death Rattlers" of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 323 off the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (CVN 68), in the Arabian Gulf. Nimitz is deployed in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations in support of Operation Inherent Resolve. While in this region, the ship and strike group are conducting maritime security operations to reassure allies and partners, preserve freedom of navigation, and maintain the free flow of commerce. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Ian Kinhead (Released) 170902-N-NI812-050



Members of the ship's company and Commissioning Guard stand at attention during the commissioning of HMAS Hobart (D39) held at Garden Island, Sydney 23 September 2017 Department of Defence (author), ABIS Bonny Gassner (photographer)

'TOPMASTS' the quarterly newsletter of the SNR is usually much thicker than the August 2017 edition proved to be. Only a couple of articles of interest to the wargamer. H.J.K Jenkins continues his descriptive tour of Spanish maritime museums with another 20. Including one in Catalonia dedicated to the early forms of submersible boats developed in Spain. Most are 'mercantile' and small, but there may turn out to be a few gems somewhere. A second article deals with the nature and development of piracy in the Caribbean during Bonaparte's wars. It's part two of that subject and looks like it might provide a few interesting possibilities beyond frigate actions. Lastly a Basque history group is planning to build a replica of the 200 tonne 'Newport Ship'. Now as a dedicated medievalist something I'd like to see.

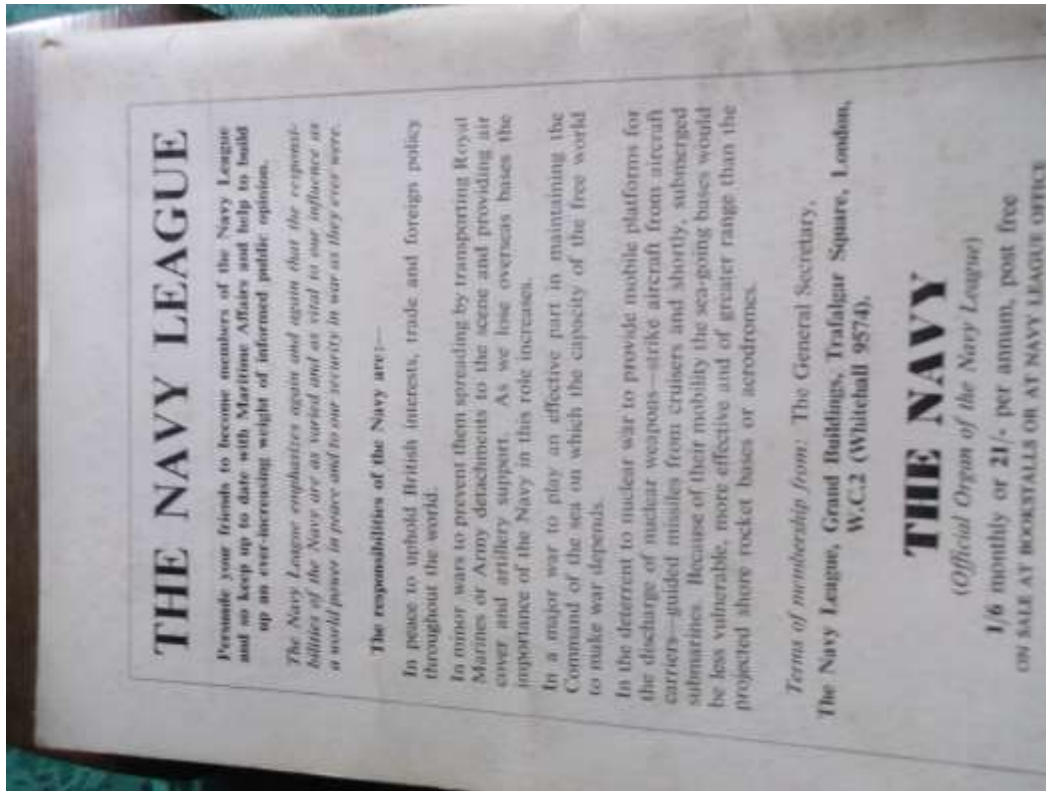
Rob Morgan.

Why 'The Navy League'?

Since 'The Navy', official organ of the League provides so many quiz questions for our own NWS 'organ' I was pleased to come upon this advert for it, dating back to the late 1950's. It appeared on the back cover of one of Ian Allen's pocket books on 'Warships of World War II' (reviewed elsewhere) and is worth a glance. Interestingly, no-one mentions how much it cost to join, 'terms of membership' on application to the General Secretary (I wonder if there was any room for wargamers?), and it suggests that 'The Navy' could be bought at 1/6* a month at bookstalls, it might even have had a wide readership? From there on in, pure nostalgia. The 'responsibilities of the Navy' are outlined and emphasized 'again and again', though the long decline is more than hinted at. 'As we lose overseas bases', the role of the navy in 'minor wars' (Yes, I wondered about that too! Minor wars? Suez? Korea? Malaya?) and in 'a major war' as well as being a deterrent to nuclear war, launching guided missiles from 'cruisers and shortly, submerged submarines'. Must be the last recorded use of the word 'aerodromes'. Sadly, as the italicised note continues *'the responsibilities of the Navy are as varied and as vital....as they ever were.'* But that seems to have been forgotten somewhere along the line.

Rob Morgan.

*For the benefit of our younger members; One shilling and sixpence is 7 ½ pence in today's money.



The following book review comes from Andy Field.

***The Kamikaze Hunters; Fighting for the Pacific, 1945* by Will Iredale (Pan Books £8.99)**

On a recent trip to the US, whilst waiting for the flight to be called, I ambled around WH Smith and bought a copy of *The Kamikaze Hunters; Fighting for the Pacific, 1945* by Will Iredale. I'm glad I did. Shortly after take-off it was apparent that the in-flight entertainment was glitched. All we had was the flight map, and the video "Beauty and The Beast!"

So I settled down and read. It was a story I knew a bit about, as I'm sure to other members, the story of the British Pacific Fleet. Or more precisely, the flyers. Starting with a general outline of the developments in naval aviation, Will Iredale then goes on to follow the likes of Wally Stradwick, Keith Quilter, Val Bennett, Chris Cartledge, Ken Ward and Roy Hawkes, ordinary boys from diverse backgrounds who all joined the Fleet Air Arm. Some trained in the UK, some in Canada and some in the US. They seemed to have the better deal! All eventually ended up in the armoured carriers of the British Pacific Fleet, fighting the Japanese in the closing months of the war. They flew Seafires – great aircraft for Combat Air

Patrols but notoriously fragile when deck landing, - Corsairs, Hellcats, Fireflies and Avengers, and fought the Japanese over Okinawa and Sakishima.

It was a great book, a thoroughly good read (and no, not just because the alternative was so dire) and I'd recommend it to anyone with an interest in the Royal Navy in the Pacific.

There are, of course, other splendid books on the BPF, *Task Force 57* by Peter Smith and *The British Pacific Fleet: The Royal Navy's Most Powerful Strike Force* by David Hobbs.

If you want a fictional account of the same theatre I'd also recommend AE Langford's *HMS Inflexible*, the third part of a trilogy that follows Captain Robert Thurston through the war at sea. The other books are *HMS Marathon* (a cruiser in the Mediterranean fighting a Sirte like engagement) and *HMS Crusader* (an escort carrier on the Russian convoy run). All are available from Amazon, I believe.

A Review by Mark Russell of Poseidon's Warriors, by John Lamshead, publisher Osprey.

In response to a request for content I thought to put pen to paper (OK, one finger typing) to give a summary of these rules, albeit a personal opinion.

Having been inspired by the trireme games run by Dave Sharp at Mortimer a good few years ago I purchased far too many Navwar galleys. I have never been entirely happy with commercially available rules as they were either too simplistic or over complicated. I also wanted to avoid using a hex map and pre-plotted movement.

I am pleased to say that these rules are a possible winner. So far I have played six games using a variety of vessels and apart from a few changes that I am contemplating they seem to work quite well.

A Summary:-

Movement

Roll for initiative, winner moving a squadron first. Hexeremes and larger form single ship squadrons. Any resulting combat is worked through then the other side moves and fights with one of their squadrons/ larger ships. The side with more squadrons move them last. Vessels move between four and eight inches.

Ramming

A ship has a listed ram factor, mostly 2, and 3 for huge ships. A target ship has a save on a D6, usually 5 or 6, although some vessels such as Fast Triremes have no save so bow to bow ramming is suicide!

Boarding

Ships in contact can attempt to grapple in order to board, then marines fight it out. If you have more or elite troops they have an advantage.

Morale

After a certain level of losses a D6 roll is made, the loss of commanders being a big negative modifier (I have found they keep getting skewered by ballista bolts in my games). Perhaps some Punic War Roman admirals should give their fleet a positive modifier, or is my bias showing?

Record keeping is not too onerous, the rules suggest using markers next to the ships but I prefer an uncluttered gaming table so created playsheets. There are not many items required, points for hull, oars, marines and on board equipment, so a middle size fleet easily fits on one A4 page. My next planned game also requires snakes, I shall explain later.

How Big is Your Navy?

Although the rules recommend about six squadrons per player I have used several more without much difficulty. I would suggest using a counter to show a squadron has moved, as in larger battles I did lose track. In a single turn not all vessels will be ramming/shooting/boarding so the game still flowed quite nicely between move and countermove. Unless you wish for a rapid bloodbath you do need to lure the enemy into your cunning plan via clever movement.

I can never resist tweaking rules so hence the following ideas,

Usually a rammed and destroyed vessel is immediately removed, however I am currently experimenting with the removal of all sunken ships (or their replacement with a wreckage marker) at turn end. This allows for last minute desperate boarding attempts before your ship founders.

I am also considering boarding over the bow following a successful ram not needing to grapple.

Both of the above may well unbalance the game in favour of Roman / Macedonian boarding fleets and disadvantage the skilled Athenian / Rhodian fleets.

Another thing to bear in mind is that if using the Debris Marker advanced rule (more realistic) the table will rapidly become clogged with such debris if playing with earlier fleets.

Snakes

My next planned battle gets a brief mention from later Roman historians. Hannibal's last victory was possibly as admiral for the fleet of king Prusias I 'The Lame' of Bithynia. Not a comment on his success, he had a leg broken whilst climbing a scaling ladder. Hannibal instructed his sailors to collect venomous snakes which were put in large clay pots intended to be thrown/catapulted onto enemy ships 'Thereby causing much confusion'. I am currently writing rules for snake bombs.

All things considered these rules work. They are neither too simplistic, nor too complicated. The mechanisms are sufficiently straightforward to allow the addition of further detailed rules should you wish.

If you like the visual aspect of ancient naval warfare, with (so far) up to 60 vessels on the table manoeuvring for ramming/boarding opportunities these rules seem to me to fit the bill.

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On 8th September, HMS PRINCE OF WALES, the second of the Royal Navy's new Aircraft Carriers was officially named by Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Rothesay, who followed Royal Navy tradition by smashing a bottle of 10 year old whisky from the Laphroaig distillery in the Isle of Islay, against the ship's hull. The ship will be the eighth in the Royal Navy to bear the name, the first was the Sixth Rate gun ship in 1693 and the previous was the 'King George V' Class Battleship that fought in World War II. One of the Guests of Honour at the naming ceremony was retired Chief Petty Officer Christopher Peacey. Now aged 93 he was one of 142 boy sailors on board the Battleship HMS PRINCE OF WALES when she was sunk by Japanese aircraft on December 10th 1941.



Baltic brawl during WWI.

<https://seanavalgazing.blogspot.co.uk/2017/05/enfilade-2017-recap-part-2-my-games.html>

Enfilade 2017 included a “Strike North” naval Game using modified Captain’s Edition Harpoon rules.

The RN’s Type 23 (Duke Class) Frigates are nearing the end of their service lives. Currently the Navy’s fleet of 13 Type 23 frigates is split between Portsmouth and Devonport, with seven based in Plymouth’s Naval Base and six located in Portsmouth. The first of 5 replacement Type 31e (Editor’s Note: “e” for export) is expected into service in 2023. It will operate with a crew of between 80 and 100 sailors. The first of 8 Type 26, HMS Glasgow could enter service in 2020. Urgent decisions need to be taken about where to base the Navy’s new fleet of frigates as both Bases want to secure their future.



Computer Generated Image of the future Type 26 Global Combat Ship for the Royal Navy. Picture: BAE Systems

(Editor’s Note again: Rumour has it that if the Type 31e becomes a corvette instead of a frigate, several senior Naval Officers will resign in disgust).

3D printing has the HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH available already.

<https://www.shapeways.com/product/THUY5A33P/queen-elizabeth-1-3000?optionId=13049617&li=marketplace>

http://www.wargamevault.com/browse/pub/11922/Simon-Stokes?term=Simon&test_epoch=0

16th Century Renaissance Naval Campaign Rules.

With the fall of the Byzantine Empire, three major naval powers established a dominance over different parts of the Mediterranean using galleys as their primary weapons at sea: the Ottomans in the east, Venice in the centre and Habsburg Spain in the west.

Players choose one of the 6 nationalities, Kingdom of Naples & Republic of Genoa, Republic of Venice, Knights of St John, Barbary States, Mamluk Sultanate, Ottoman Empire. Profiles for each nation can be found in the campaign book.

The campaign starts in the year 1503 and runs through to 1573. Due to their limited endurance at sea, strategy for Galley warfare is all about control of ports.

Campaign book includes historical background, campaign map, campaign rules, simple fleet action wargames rules, national profiles, printable counters, index of ports and port record sheets.

(Editor's Note: No I am not on commission).



Revenge Class Battleship HMS RAMILLIES, painted by Keith Brown who has a liking for Victory at Sea Rules (supplemented by David Manley's minelayer rules) for WWII.

October Sea-Fights.....

On October 1st 1748, another of those nowadays little-remembered sea encounters, off Havana, between rear-Admiral Knowles and a Spanish Squadron, in which the British came off better, but their Admiral came off decidedly worse. He was court-martialled for his failure to impose a total defeat on the enemy. On 2nd, in 1804 one of the last fireship attacks carried out by the navy off Boulogne- it was a failure. While on the 5th, off Cadiz in that year, a 4-ship British Squadron captured three out of four Spanish warships, and sank the other.

On the 11th, a more vigorous affair. Camperdown 1797, Duncan administering a serious blow to de Winter's Dutch fleet. The day afterwards, 12th, Vigo Bay, 1702, and Rooke's immense victory, sinking all of the 17 French warships opposing him, and took or sank 17 Spanish treasure ships! The same day in 1798, another overlooked encounter. Sir John Warren with 3 ships of the line and 5 frigates, took four French prizes and captured Commodore Bompard off Donegal. The month warms up by the 13th, when the Royal Navy defeated the Americans on Lake Champlain. On the 14th in 1747, Hawke with 15 sail was off Ushant, and in action against the Marquis de L'Entandueire captured six enemy ships, with the flag hoisted 'General Chase'.

On the 20th in 1782, Howe aboard *Victory* fought the French and Spaniards, with no great outcome, but in 1827, the last of all sailing ship battles, Navarino (I don't recall ever seeing this multi-national fleet encounter played on the table top. Does anyone?)

On the 21st, Trafalgar. My favourite naval wargame words....'Engage the enemy more closely!'

The 23rd is the Battle of Leyte Gulf, 1944, where the USN ruled the waves but there were RN and RAN warships present, on 29th in 1704, Leake destroyed eight French men of war at Gibraltar with only two sail.

Rob Morgan.

SIGNAL PAD!

Coming in November: HMAS CANBERRA, HMAS NORMAN, HMS EAGLE, HMS WARSPITE, Guns Guns Guns, Operation Drumbeat, The Cod War plus lots more.

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.navalwargamesociety.org.

Membership secretary: simonjohnstokes@aol.com

NWS Events and Regional Contacts, 2017

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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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