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# All Guns Blazing!

## Newsletter of the Naval Wargames Society

### No. 281 – MARCH 2018

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#### ANNOUNCEMENT

There is a notable centenary coming in April, that of the Raid on Zeebrugge. The Society will be presenting a game at Salute based on the Raid which we also plan to run at the Naval Wargames Weekend, Joy of Six and Colours.

Additionally we have agreed a date with the National Museum of the Royal Navy at Portsmouth historic dockyard for us to run the game there on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> April following on from the museum's Zeebrugge Centenary Conference (20 April 2018 until 21 April 2018, 13:50 - 15:50) which members might also be interested in registering for.

Please drop me a line at [simonjohnstokes@aol.com](mailto:simonjohnstokes@aol.com) if you would like to help out in running the game at the museum or at any of the shows listed above.

More information on the Zeebrugge Centenary Conference can be obtained from:

Christopher Gale Senior Curator  
National Museum of the Royal Navy,  
HM Naval Base (PP66)  
Portsmouth PO1 3NH

[christopher.gale@nrmn.org.uk](mailto:christopher.gale@nrmn.org.uk)

<http://www.historicdockyard.co.uk/events-by-date/event/1255-zeebrugge-the-centenary-conference>



#### Battle of the Atlantic Memorial.

News to me, but the February 2018 edition of the Society for Nautical Research Newsletter 'TopMasts' carries information on the launch of a campaign to raise money for a permanent memorial in the form of a ship and crew at the Pier Head in Liverpool. The target date is 2019, and the site chosen is near the former Battle HQ, which the note says is now a Museum (?). Other members living near Liverpool may know more of this project, but in any case it seems that it is just the sort of proposal in which the NWS ought to be involved or at least publicly support.

Rob Morgan.



2nd in the new Ford-class is the USS John F Kennedy CVN-79. Currently, under construction at Newport News Shipbuilding in Virginia, this vessel is set to be commissioned in 2020.

Computer generated publicity image.

“Captain Sonar” and the smaller version “Sonar” are board games for up to 8 extroverts and look, to me, like they could be lots of fun with the right people (and a few beers), if not a realistic sub simulation. Another board game currently on “Kickstarter”, UBOOT is generating a lot of on line interest. The Kick-starter target of £65,000 has been exceeded as pledges head towards £500,000. There are “Dice Tower” videos and other entries on “YouTube”. Availability is not expected to be before the end of 2018; check out the on line videos and comments to see if you could be persuaded to sign up. The fact that there is a (free) companion app puts me off a bit but no doubt tech savvy members of NWS may find this feature is the one that makes it.

**UBOOT The Board Game** is a real-time table-top game of WW2 submarine warfare. An underwater cooperative war thriller that allows 1 to 4 players to assume the roles of the Captain, the First Officer, the Navigator, and the Chief Engineer on board of a type VIIC U-boat. The game is enhanced by a companion app, allowing for an unprecedented level of realism, as well as a challenging enemy A.I. which will push your skills to the limit. The action unfolds both on the strategic and the tactical scale, always demanding teamwork, efficient crew management, and quick situation assessment.

<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/phalanxgames/uboot-the-board-game?ref=8huarm/>



<https://boardgamegeek.com/thread/1923671/second-third-and-fourth-contact-ubootbg>



Bomb dropped by Japanese pilot Kazumi Horie exploding on the flight deck of USS Enterprise during Battle of the Eastern Solomons, 24 Aug 1942.  
US National Archives and Records Administration

Sea Quiz 68 answers.....

You won't believe it but quite a few of the veteran readers had been members of the answer to question 3. I wonder if they had a journal? As always happens with the gentleman who's the Q4 answer, nostalgia crept into the correspondence columns...big time! The Palestine question drew a number of replies from men who had served in 'HMS Warspite', with the usual crop of memories.

1. The Fleet Air Arm. Anyone know why?
2. Air Attack Imminent!
3. This was the Imperial Maritime League....founded in 1901.
4. Rudyard Kipling, in 'Sea Warfare' a poem from 1916.
5. This was an armoured train operated and manned by the Navy in Palestine c.1935.

The USS Constitution sits moored pier side at Boston Navy Shipyard in Boston, Mass. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Joshua Hammond (Released) 180103-N-NZ935-0022



### SEA QUIZ 69.

A couple of rather difficult questions this month. Number 4 left me utterly bemused, I must say! Q.2 actually brought a response from one of his former shipmates!

On we go.....

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1. What, collectively, were the early destroyers known as?
  2. Whose alias was 'Mr. Johnson.'?
  3. At what depth is a submarine said to be 'asleep.'?
  4. Where and what was the 'Wet Triangle' in 1939-45?
  5. Where would you find a panic party?

Asleep??? Hm?

Rob Morgan.



Pawn Takes Castle by Tom Freeman captures a brace of Dauntless SBD Bombers ripping into Akagi at the Battle of Midway and is used as the Box Art for Worthington's game "Holdfast Pacific".



Picture from “The Miniatures Page”.

Pirate Ship Card games. By Wizzkids.

Another odd purchase, at a pound a pack in a local games shop- from the seriously discounted bin, known as ‘The Lost Hope’. Something I honestly don’t remember featuring in any of the model or games (or toy) shops ten or twelve years ago. Which is when a company Wizzkids produced a substantial series of small packets of game components, described as ‘a game in every pack’ under the title ‘Pirates of.....’ The end of the sentence could be ‘...of the Spanish Main’, ‘...of the Frozen North’, ‘...of the South China Seas’, ‘...of the Ocean’s Edge’, etc, etc. There must have been a score of alternative scenarios. You Tube has lots of short videos about these cards.

Some members and readers may know the games, invested a few pounds in collecting them. Each pack contains two ship models, easily assembled without any form of adhesive- just pressed together. Along with them a piece of scenery...an island, a fog-bank, an iceberg, that sort of thing. There were some press out gold coin tokens, a character from the crew, and notes on a scenario or two. Interesting enough.

Some of the more unusual scenarios included press out monsters, a giant crab for instance, or a really good looking squid. Sea serpents, dragons, etc, etc. Great value for the SF or Fantasy gamer, though the assembled monsters do look like old fashioned ‘flats’ used to!

The scenery is useful, and could be used straight in a standard wargame, or ‘built-up’. It would be interesting to know, just for academic purposes, if there were any inhabited scenery pieces towns, harbours, or forts? The coins and tokens, if you weren’t going to use them to play the intended game in the pack, could well serve as bases for figures.

It’s the ships which are interesting. They tend towards the theme of the pack. So, in the ‘Pirates of the South China Seas’ pack, Junks are the ship model. In the frozen north, there are Viking Long-ships. Off the Barbary Coast, galleys. Ships in the packs came as small, medium and large vessels. Though I found a hint that there were some giant sea craft around. Of course, since the packs were sealed, you had no

way of knowing which ships you would get! Hence there were those which were common, Like the French two masted 'Le Dijon', others were less so; the small single masted oared junk, 'Floating Stone' for instance. Some models were described as 'rare', others as 'Super Rare' (Hmmm???). One or two appear to have been 'Special Edition' models. It seemed to become one of those 'flash-in-the-pan' collector's games, a sort of naval Pokémon. I have no idea how many ships were actually manufactured. That dip into You Tube, suggests that some of the games players owned a hundred or so; others described a collection of fifty or seventy models as small.

The models are flat, pressed out from the credit card shape hard plastic, and slot together, both sides of a hull, decks, masts, and some models have four or five masts, bowsprits in some cases, or banks of oars. The card is beautifully coloured in every case. Each mast has pennants, where appropriate and a stern mounted jack with a flag. These are interchangeable by the way, to alter fleet composition presumably. I've seen Pirate flags, naturally, as well as Royal Naval white ensigns, US flags, French and Spanish. There may well be others. As a scale, I'd go for about 1/600<sup>th</sup> or thereabouts, vague but roughly vague. They look good in a small flotilla or fleet on a table top.

Like so many of the games targeted at youngsters, this was apparently a five-minute wonder. Certainly, if the reviewers on the internet are to be believed, in a year or two the game had died away, others had replaced it.

Hopefully, reading this, there will be someone with a far better knowledge of the games, the ship models and accessories. Another potentially useful loss to the world of wargaming.

Anyone know more?

Rob Morgan.

### March Sea-Fights.

On March 4<sup>th</sup> 1941, 'Operation Claymore', the raid on the Lofoten Islands, sometimes overlooked as a naval operation, but substantial at that time of the war. An Enigma machine and code books were captured. On the 10<sup>th</sup>, in 1705, Leake relieved Gibraltar, having destroyed or captured the French squadron off Marbella. On the 14<sup>th</sup> in 1757, Admiral Byng was shot. On the same day in 1795, Admiral Hotham with over twenty sail, South West of Genoa, fought 15 French, with little to show for it bar two captures. On this busy day in 1915, the Royal Navy found *SMS Dresden* at Juan Fernandez, where she scuttled rather than fight.

On March 18<sup>th</sup> 1915, the Allied fleets were repulsed at the Dardanelles, with heavy losses to mines. On 21<sup>st</sup>, in 1918, there was a substantial action between light units, 18 German destroyers and 10 Allied in company with 3 Monitors off Dunkirk.

Inconclusive. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> in 1942, Vian saw off a substantial Italian force attacking a convoy en-route to Malta.

On 28<sup>th</sup> March in 1941, Cunningham in *Warspite* achieved the significant victory off Cape Matapan, and exactly a year later, the successful raid on St. Nazaire took place- and, yes it was a naval action.

Rob Morgan.

By chance I came across another March event worth a mention. 5<sup>th</sup> March 1936, the Spitfire, iconic fighter aircraft of World War II makes its maiden flight at Eastleigh Aerodrome. I know it's not "Naval" but there was a Seafire version and hey, it's the Spitfire.

Norman Bell

### ZEEBRUGGE 1918.

The SNR journal *'The Mariner's Mirror'* ( Vol 104:1- 2018) provides a magnificent twelve page article on the subject of "A Model of HMS *Vindictive* as fitted for the Zeebrugge Raid 1918." Written by Alistair Roach it deals with the complex and very interesting conversion of the ship, and the compilation of details and evidence for the making of the IWM's 1in=16ft model by Norman Ough in 1923.

This is a real wargamer's article. Believe me.

*HMS Vindictive*, an *Arrogant* class cruiser, was selected as the main assault ship for the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1918 attack. She was accompanied by three old Cruisers, *HMS's Thetis, Intrepid and Iphigenia* as block ships, about fifty CMB's and launches, two subs, for demolition purposes, and was supported by a dozen Destroyers, with Monitors for supporting fire. The raid is, of course, extremely well known amongst historians and naval wargamers (I've no doubt that somewhere in the NWS, a Zeebrugge 1918 game is being planned), but the nature of the armament of *HMS Vindictive* as fitted for the raid is more elusive!

Though there's still some doubt over detail, this article surely provides as much information as any wargamer needs. In terms of armament, she carried an 11in howitzer, two 7.5's. No fewer than 16 Stokes mortars, the same number of Lewis guns, two 1.5 pdr pom-poms, and flamethrowers forwards. Roach describes in detail the protection of the Cruiser, and considers the research undertaken by Ough several years after the event. There was naturally, total secrecy over the conversion of the ship, and the inference is that one or two minor details may not be 100% accurate. However, the model, and there are several plans and photographs in the piece, looks superb.

Well worth reading, and though I don't know of a model of *HMS Vindictive* rigged for the Zeebrugge Raid, someone else might. It would be a magnificent model in 1/600<sup>th</sup>!

Incidentally, 'TopMasts' the SNR newsletter brings news of a Zeebrugge conference at the National Museum of the Royal Navy at Portsmouth on 20/21<sup>st</sup> April. Topics include the Flanders Flotilla, Keyes and the planning, Covert raids in WWI, Propaganda and the lessons learned.

Rob Morgan.

### South China Sea Developments.....

A while ago, I looked for the first time in years at my old 1/1200<sup>th</sup> scale PLAN Navy flotillas, once regarded as a small fleet of elderly, coastal defence vessels. But of course, times have changed. The revelations ( and photographs) in 'The Times' of the massive militarisation of the archipelago of the Spratly islands, with airfields, missiles, large garrisons and fleet support capabilities, together with the remarkable ordnance news that the PLAN have developed an electromagnetic supergun and mounted it on a warship for trials, made me think that it's time to reconsider the Far East. The supergun, with an astonishing velocity, is based on the same technology the US Navy uses to launch planes from its carriers.

This is almost certainly where the next naval conflict in the world will begin, around the disputed shipping lanes and half submerged territories of the South China Sea. Now, I've dipped back into my old copies of the South Korean Defence Journal for a little background research. There's plenty of it, too. However, for the moment, here are a couple of photos of my old PLAN warships, from the 1980's. Three *Komar* missile boats and a *Luta* class destroyer in company.

More follows.....

Rob Morgan.





## **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)

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## **NWS Events and Regional Contacts, 2017**

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### **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/>

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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)
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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](mailto:stuart_barnes_watson@hotmail.com)

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

Tel: 01271 866637

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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)