



All Guns Blazing!

Newsletter of the Naval Wargames Society

No. 236 – JUNE 2014

EDITORIAL

Another bulging All Guns Blazing. Please feel free to send to me articles of interest for inclusion in future AGBs. The success of "Battlefleet" also, can only be maintained if good items are sent to Dave Manley. There is a hard core of members who send in articles on a regular basis. Let's make that core as big as possible.

70 years since D – Day. And before anyone asks, no I'm not old enough to have been there. (But not by much).

If you want to follow progress on the new HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH, see www.aircraftcarrieralliance.co.uk www.royalnavymod.uk/queenelizabeth or for twitters #QECarriers.

No room for a game report on Mers-el-Kebir in this month's AGB. If I can not get it in July's edition, I'll send it off to Dave Manley and hope it's good enough for "Battlefleet".

Somewhere in the World, the Sun is over the yardarm.

Norman Bell.

VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

June 2014

Chairman: Stuart Barnes-Watson

Stuart Barnes-Watson Chairman
Simon Stokes Membership Secretary & Treasurer
Norman Bell Editor 'All Guns Blazing'
Dave Manley Editor 'Battlefleet'

ALL HANDS ON DECK!! Our very own naval wargames show is on Saturday 21st/22nd June at the Explosion Museum in Gosport, Hampshire. The museum is well worth a visit. The destructive power of guns, mines, torpedoes and missiles is well illustrated here. There is a café which is open till 5pm. The quality of games is of a high standard and well worth making the effort to get to. I shall have a large selection of 1/1200 warships (ironclads to modern) plus my Lissa 1866 and Anglo Russian fleets 1854 in 1/2400, and my 1/3000 Spanish Civil War fleets. (these were my pride and joy until I replaced them in 1/1250).and books for sale . Overnight sleepovers with your shipmates are an added bonus! It's always good to meet members.

More on my travels next month, but I know Norman has a bumper edition in readiness so will save accordingly.

Stuart

Answers to Sea Quiz 32.

Another less than simple set of questions, but I liked this bunch....

1. Well, the 1st Sea Lord, Hood, advocated turrets, so HMS Hood had them (Hm???), but was 'an inferior ship to the others of the 'Royal Sovereign' Class... which all had barbettes.
2. The three 5-masted warships were HMS Minotaur, Agincourt and Northumberland.
3. Now the answer to this one created another of the stirs in the columns of the journal... 1889 apparently, but they were referred to as 'Line-of-Battleships' in 1888.
4. The Maplin Mile was, is, at the mouth of the London River.
5. This is a beauty... the eight features of the Pre-Dreadnoughts are...
6. 1. The bow of HMS Swiftsure, 2..The fore barbette of HMS Majestic, 3...the bridge and foremast of HMS Renown (after a refit-of course!)..4...amidships battery of HMS Centurion (after her reconstruction!)...5..The funnels of HMS Lord Nelson (after they were heightened!)...6...Main mast and shelter deck of HMS King Edward VII, and 7...After turret of HMS Hood...lastly 8....Stern of HMS Sans Pareil.

Now if you got all eight of the pre-dread answers you're probably a retired naval constructor, or are wargaming in 1:1 scale!

Sea Quiz 33.

I've only just noticed the nineteenth century flavour to last month's questions, so here's something of a change. Yes, question 1 did appear in 1954, and was allocated 6 marks. Odd, eh?

1. Which warship once tumbled a man off his bicycle?
2. Name four British warships named after foreign royalty.
3. What was the first British ironclad with a rounded stern?
4. What was the full title of the Fleet Air Arm when formed in 1924?
5. What in 1890, did Crescent and Royal Arthur of the 'Edgar's' have the others didn't?

Good Luck!
Rob Morgan.

That excellent Militaria e-newsletter '*Basiliscoe Mercury*' this month mentioned a newly issued guide to shipwrecks around the coast of Scotland, and one in particular (among many hundreds) caught my attention. It was the loss in the Winter of 1687 of a Danish Man o'War, the '*Wrangels Palais*', which went aground on rocks and was lost while 'hunting Turkish Pirates in the North Sea'. Given the size of the Royal Navy, and the existence of substantial French, Dutch fleets, as well as the Danes of course, this seems potentially interesting as a wargame. If the Turks were in the North Sea, then how were they operating? Galleys could be successful in northern waters, as Spinola proved almost a century before.

Rob Morgan.

March 2014.

'That Hideous Orange!'

That never really nautical newspaper 'The Guardian' carried an article on *HMS Victory* recently. It dealt with the striped sides of the old warship, and in particular the brighter ochre or yellow (whatever!) bits of it. Researchers from

the University of Lincoln have apparently found traces of the original paint, which seems to differ in colour from the modern replicated decoration job. It will, I suspect, turn up as a heated topic on the pages of '*The Mariner's Mirror*' shortly, and then we'll all have to repaint our Napoleonics!

Rob Morgan.

The following two articles, which I've had to edit down a bit, were seen by Jeff Crane.

The Last Ride of the Yamato

by [laststandonzombieisland](#)



Here we see the massive mega battleship *Yamato* of the Imperial Japanese Navy fitting out at Kure DY in 1941. Up until 1934 the Japanese paid lip service to the various Naval Treaties that limited the size and number of warships in the world's navies. For instance, the huge cruisers designed in this period were 'officially' under 10,000-tons (although they rose to almost twice this amount when fully armed, loaded, and armoured in WWII). The official limit on battleship size was 35,000-tons and Western ships, such as the new *USS Washington* class in the US and the *HMS King George V*-class battleships in the UK.



Well in 1934 Japan dropped out of the agreement and the gloves came off. They soon designed the largest battle-wagon in the world. *Ever*.



At full load these ships would top out at 72,000-tons. The next closest rival in size was the US *Iowa* class, which at their heaviest displacement pushed some 50,000-tons on a hull that was about twenty feet shorter. However the *Yamato* was twenty feet *wider* and as such was a very

beamy girl. She also drew more than 35-feet of seawater under her hull, which limited her moorings considerably.



On sea trials Oct 1941

These ships were amazingly armoured, more so than any ship before or since. This included :

- 650 mm (26 in) on face of main turrets (YES, 26-inches!)
- 410 mm (16 in) side armor belt
- 200 mm (7.9 in) central(75%) armored deck
- 226.5 mm (8.92 in) outer(25%) armored deck

As point of reference the second place winner for the most armor carried was on the *USS Iowa* class battlewagons, which had some 19.7-inches on turret faces and a 12-inch belt.



These ships could put up some lead, carrying an amazing 205 pieces of artillery from the giant 18.1-inch main guns (the largest in the world) to a huge array of AAA weapons. This included (in 1945):

- 9 × 46 cm (18.1 in) (3×3) (firing 3,000-lb shells)
- 6 × 155 mm (6.1 in) (2×3)
- 24 × 127 mm (5.0 in)
- 162 × 25 mm (0.98 in) Anti-Aircraft (52×3, 6×1)
- 4 × 13.2 mm (0.52 in) AA (2×2)

In short, these ships were massive war-engines and are seen by many as the pinnacle of battleship design (no offense to the *Iowas*). I mean 18-inch guns, 26-inches of armor, come on. As further protection against aircraft, her 18-inch guns could fire special "Common Type 3" anti-

aircraft shells, known to the Japanese as "*Sanshiki*". These shells contained over 900 incendiary tubes each capable of shooting 16-foot flames in all directions once the shell exploded. Not something you would want to fly into.

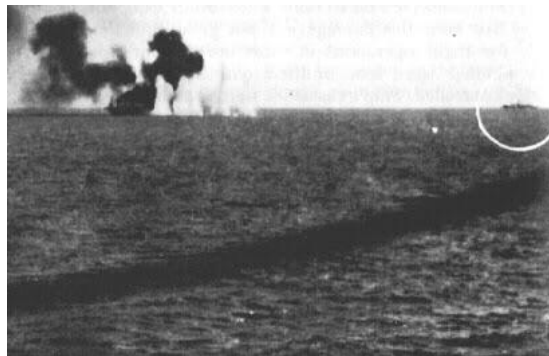
Five of the class, *Yamato*, *Musahsi*, and *Shinano* (along with two hulls, "*Warships No 111*", and "*797*") were envisioned for the Combined Fleet, with *Yamato* being laid down in 1937. The last two never were while *Shinano* was converted to an aircraft carrier.

Commissioned 16 December 1941, *Yamato* came out of the yard a week too late for Pearl Harbor. As flagship of the fleet until 1943 when her sister ship *Musashi* was completed, she spent the first part of the war in such duty appropriate for such a large ship-- being the primary ride of Adm. Yamamoto, from which he lost the Battle of Midway from her decks.

After 1943 she was relegated to a high-speed, heavily armored transport, running troops and valuables from island to island just ahead of Adm Nimitz's oncoming horde that was the US Navy. Ironically her giant guns were useless to the Japanese at Guadalcanal as only armored piercing shells, made for sinking ships, and not HE shells for shore bombardment were in use at the time. If there had been, the Marines on Henderson Field may have had a very different outcome.

She dodged several torpedoes from US submarines until the end of 1943 when *USS Skate* (SS-305) pumped a fish into her. Damaged but not sunk (I mean come on she was 72,000-tons!), she next appeared in the pivotal battles in the Philippines in 1944. There she helped escort Ozawa's Mobile Fleet during the Battle of the Philippine Sea, then caught up with the half-dozen small US Jeep carriers of Taffy 3, firing at the 7800-ton *Casablanca*-class escort carrier *USS Gambier Bay* on 25 October 1944.

It was during that engagement that, while firing shells marked with dye to better call shot from individual guns, an American sailor called out "They are shooting at us in Technicolor!"



The stricken *Gambier Bay* on fire, left, with *Yamato*, circled, right.

The *Yamato* closed to within point-blank distance of *Gambier Bay*, now dead in the water, and shelled the tiny flat top until she sank with great loss of life. It was one of the few recorded instances of a battleship sinking a carrier in warfare. Carriers, however had already had their way with the class, sinking *Yamato*'s sister ship *Musashi* the previous day during the Battle of the Sibuyan Sea, taking 17 bomb and 19 torpedo hits, with the loss of 1,023 of her 2,399-man crew. This left *Yamato* an orphan of her class, as *Shinano*, converted to an aircraft carrier, had been sunk earlier that month, the largest naval vessel to have been sunk by a submarine.

Retiring from the Philippines, *Yamato* was almost all that was left of the Japanese fleet that was still battle worthy, forming a reserve with the old WWI-era battleship *Nagato* and the fast

battleship *Kongo*. Well, *Kongo* was sunk by *USS Sealion (SS-315)* on 21 November, leaving just *Nagato* who was soon to be relegated to coast defence only, and *Yamato* as the IJN's last capital ships.

In April 1945, with the US invasion of Okinawa, the Emperor demanded action from what was left of the Navy. This led Vice Chief of the Imperial Japanese Navy General Staff, and Chief of Staff of the Combined Fleet, Vice Admiral Seiichi Ito to scrape together all he could to sail against the Americans. This meant the *Yamato*.

Her battle fleet was simply the 6000-ton *Agano*-class light cruiser *Yahagi* and 8 destroyers. Since it was to be a one-way mission, a naval kamikaze strike against a fleet that outnumbered it by a factor of at least 6:1, Ito would personally command it.

Dubbed "Operation Ten-Go" (Heaven One), the fleet sortied on 7 April directly towards Okinawa. There it was soon confronted by over 400 carrier based strike planes of Adm. Marc Mitscher's fleet of 11 flattops, more than the Japanese had at Pearl Harbor against eight battleships.

It was not a long engagement.



By 1200 the first aircraft appeared over *Yamato*. By 1400 the cruiser *Yahagi*, riddled with bombs and torpedoes, sank along with half of the destroyer screen. By 1420, *Yamato* was dead in the water, her rudder shot away, her superstructure ablaze.



She has suffered more than 11 torpedo hits and six bomb hits. At 1423, one of the two bow magazines detonated in a tremendous explosion. The resulting mushroom cloud—over 3 miles high—was seen a 180 miles away on Kyushu and was the funeral pyre for some 3000 of her crew, more than was lost by the US Navy in all of the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor.



Although the undamaged half of the destroyer screen stood by to pick up the crew from *Yamato*, Admiral Ito, still alive, chose to go down with the ship.



Just ten U.S. aircraft were shot down by anti-aircraft fire from the Japanese ships; with 12 airmen killed. The Japanese suffered over 4000 casualties proving the last surface engagement by battleships versus carriers at sea and closing an era in Naval warfare forever.

Her wreck was found in 1982, broken into two large pieces much like the *Titanic* was, at rest under 1100 feet of seawater.

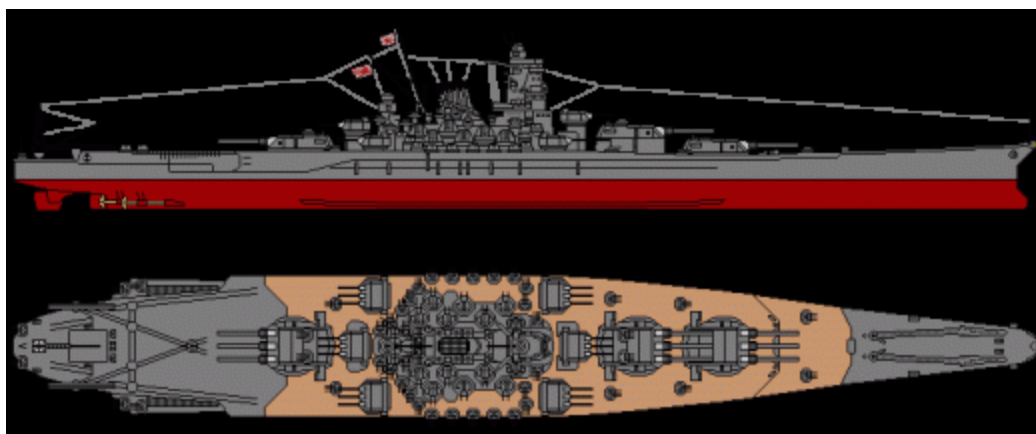


(This picture from Todd Kauderer.)

The Japanese have a particular affinity for this ship. The word *Yamato*, since it harkens back to old feudal Japan, has great significance. This makes *Yamato* akin to the names Plymouth, Philadelphia, or Washington in the US. A huge (and we mean huge) [1:10 scale model](#) of the *Yamato* has been constructed in Japan and is a very popular attraction there. '



A recent book and film on the vessel proved hugely successful in Japan. It seems after all that the *Yamato* is very far indeed from her last ride.



Specs:

Displacement: 65,027 tonnes (64,000 long tons)
 71,659 tonnes (70,527 long tons) (full load)
 Length: 256 m (839 ft 11 in) (waterline)
 263 m (862 ft 10 in) (overall)
 Beam: 38.9 m (127 ft 7 in)
 Draft: 11 m (36 ft 1 in)
 Installed power: 150,000 shp (111,855 kW)
 Propulsion: 12 Kampon boilers, driving four steam turbines
 Four three-bladed propellers

Speed: 27 knots (50 km/h; 31 mph)
 Range: 7,200 nmi (13,334 km; 8,286 mi) at 16 knots (30 km/h; 18 mph)
 Complement: 2,500–2,800

Armament:

(1941) 9 × 46 cm (18.1 in) (3×3)
 12 × 155 mm (6.1 in) (4×3)
 12 × 127 mm (5.0 in) (6×2)
 24 × 25 mm (0.98 in) (8×3)
 4 × 13.2 mm (0.52 in) AA (2×2)

(1945) 9 × 46 cm (18.1 in) (3×3)
 6 × 155 mm (6.1 in) (2×3)
 24 × 127 mm (5.0 in) (12×2)

162 × 25 mm (0.98 in) Anti-Aircraft (52×3, 6×1)
4 × 13.2 mm (0.52 in) AA (2×2)

Armour: 650 mm (26 in) on face of main turrets
410 mm (16 in) side armour
200 mm (7.9 in) central(75%) armoured deck
226.5 mm (8.92 in) outer(25%) armoured deck
Aircraft carried: 7
Aviation facilities: 2 aircraft catapults

If you liked this column, please consider joining the International Naval Research Organization (INRO), Publishers of Warship International. They are possibly one of the best sources of naval study, images, and fellowship you can find <http://www.warship.org/>

Archer the giant killer and her pink sistership, by laststandonzombieisland



Here we see the United States Ship Archerfish, SS-311, a diesel-electric fleet submarine of the USS Balao-class with a bone in her mouth in open waters. The Archerfish had a safe and happy life, with an earned a reputation as the Jack the Giant Killer of the US WWII sub force.

A member of the 128-ship Balao class, she was one of the most mature US navy diesel designs of the World War Two era, constructed with knowledge gained from the earlier Gato-class. US subs, unlike those of many navies of the day, were 'fleet' boats, capable of unsupported operations in deep water far from home. Able to range 11,000 nautical miles on their reliable diesel engines, they could undertake 75-day patrols that could span the immensity of the Pacific. Carrying 24 (often unreliable) Mk14 Torpedoes, thee subs often sank anything short of a 5000-ton Maru or warship by surfacing and using their 4-inch/50 caliber and 40mm/20mm AAA's. The also served as the firetrucks of the fleet, rescuing downed naval aviators from right under the noses of Japanese warships.

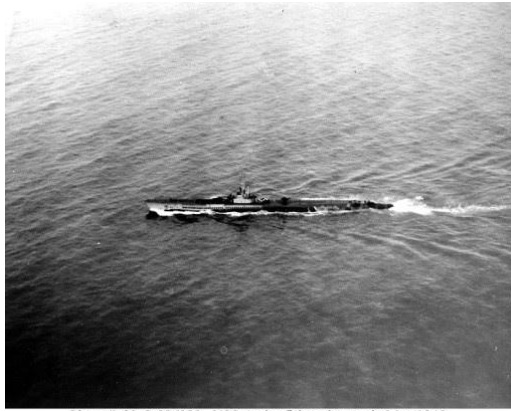
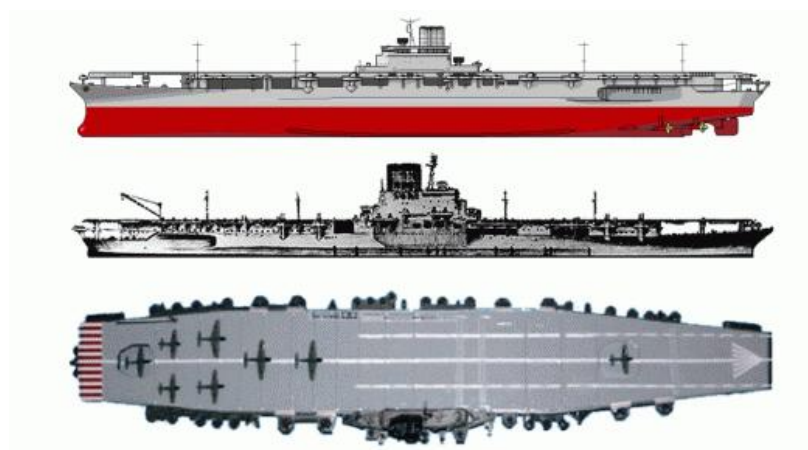


Photo # 80-G-326329 USS Archerfish underway in May 1945

Laid down at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Kittery, Maine 22 JAN 1943, she was commissioned just over eight months later on 4 September and promptly sailed for the Pacific to join the fray. She left Pearl Harbor two days before Christmas, 1943 on her first of seven war patrols. Her first four patrols were entirely uneventful, detailed to scan regions of the Pacific that were largely devoid of Japanese activity by 1944. Her fifth one, however, struck pay-dirt.

Standing off Tokyo Bay in November 1944, she was positioned to rescue downed B-29 crews who were bombing the Japanese Home Islands in preparation for the huge planned invasions in 1945-46. Then on the evening of November 28th, she was what appeared to be a huge naval tanker with a strong destroyer escort nudge out of the bay. This 'tanker' soon picked up 23-knots and started to zig-zag, which meant she was something altogether different.

Following closely, Archerfish worked her way through the screen of escorts, aligned her six forward tubes amidships of the immense target, and let rip a half-dozen improved Mk14 torpedoes, four of which found purchase on the hull of the largest aircraft carrier ever built in the world up until that time-- the 73,000-ton, 872-foot long Imperial Japanese Naval ship Shinano. Capable of carrying upto 120 aircraft, including 47 in an armored hangar, she was the largest warship built until the USS Forrestal was completed in the 1950s.



Originally laid down as a super-battleship of the Yamato-class, she was converted following Japanese losses at Midway Island to a flattop. She had just been commissioned nine days before and was, when Archerfish found her, on her sea trials before entering service. Her existence was a secret and she was being moved in the middle of the night to Kure to complete her fitting out (she didn't even have most of her watertight hatches installed). She was such a secret, in fact she is the only major warship built in the 20th century to have avoided being officially photographed during its construction, with just two known photos, taken by chance, existing of her.

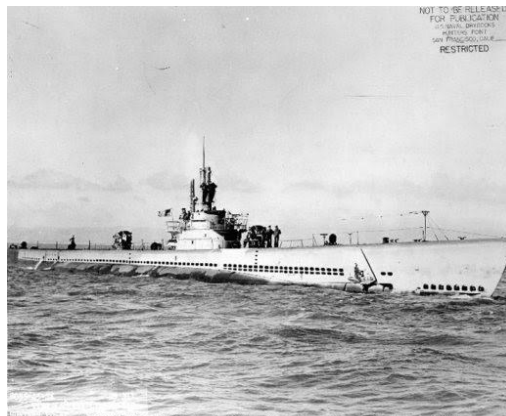
The Japanese didn't even send radio messages about her sailing, much less her sinking.

Since the US Navy didn't even think she existed, Archerfish and her skipper, Commander Joseph F. Enright, were not recognized for the feat of killing the huge carrier-- which to this day is the largest ship ever sunk by a submarine in warfare-- until after the war ended and post-war analysis of Japanese records. It was then that Enright picked up the Navy Cross and Archerfish was given the Presidential Unit Citation.

Her citation reads:

"For extraordinary heroism in action during the Fifth War Patrol against enemy Japanese combatant units in restricted waters of the Pacific. Relentless in tracking an alert and powerful hostile force which constituted a potential threat to our vital operations in the Philippine area, the Archerfish (SS-311) culminated a dogged six and one-half-hour pursuit by closing her high-speed target, daringly penetrated the strong destroyer escort screen, and struck fiercely at a large Japanese aircraft carrier Shinano with all six of her torpedoes finding their mark to sink this extremely vital enemy ship. Subjected to devastating air and surface anti-submarine measures, the Archerfish skillfully evaded her attackers by deep submergence and returned to port in safety. Handled with superb seamanship, she responded gallantly to the fighting determination of the officers and men and dealt a fatal blow to one of the enemy's major Fleet units despite the most merciless Japanese opposition and rendered valiant service toward the ultimate destruction of a crafty and fanatic enemy."

After this her sixth and seventh war patrols were back to being much less exciting, performing lifeguard duty for pilots and watching the almost-empty sea lanes for the occasional ship. Nevertheless, she was part of the US Fleet anchored in Tokyo Bay on Sept 2, 1945 for the Japanese surrender and end of WWII.



Decommissioned soon after World War Two, she sat in mothballs until Korea when she was reactivated. Unlike more than 90 WWII-era US diesel subs, she was not updated in the Guppy program with a new sail, snorkels, and improved batteries and fire control systems, keeping her old retro look until the end of the career.



Archerfish (inboard) and Balao (outboard), Key West 1959.

On October 19th, stripped of anything useful, she was towed out to sea and sunk by the new Pascagoula-built Skipjack-class nuclear submarine USS Snook (SSN-592). Archerfish survived the first two torpedoes until sunk appropriately by an old-school WWII-era Mk 14-5 in 52 seconds. The ship still has a very active veterans association at ussarcherfish.com. Although she is no longer afloat, eight Balao-class submarines are preserved as museum ships across the country.

Please visit one of these fine ships and keep the legacy alive:

USS Batfish (SS-310) at War Memorial Park in Muskogee, Oklahoma.

USS Becuna (SS-319) at Independence Seaport Museum in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

USS Bowfin (SS-287) at USS Bowfin Submarine Museum & Park in Honolulu, Hawaii.

USS Clamagore (SS-343) at Patriot's Point in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina.

USS Ling (SS-297) at New Jersey Naval Museum in Hackensack, New Jersey.

USS Lionfish (SS-298) at Battleship Cove in Fall River, Massachusetts.

USS Pampanito (SS-383) at San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park in San Francisco, California, (which played the part of the fictional USS Stingray in the movie Down Periscope).

USS Razorback (SS-394) at Arkansas Inland Maritime Museum in North Little Rock, Arkansas.

Specs:

Displacement, Surfaced: 1,526 t., Submerged: 2,424 t. Length 311' 10" Beam 27' 3"

Draft 15' 3" Speed, Surfaced 20.25 kts, Submerged 8.75 kts Cruising Range, 11,000 miles surfaced at 10kts; Submerged Endurance, 48 hours at 2kts Operating Depth Limit, 400 ft

Complement 6 Officers 60 Enlisted. Armament, ten 21" torpedo tubes, six forward, four aft, 24 torpedoes, one 4"/50 caliber deck gun, one 40mm gun, two .50 cal. machine guns. Patrol Endurance 75 days. Propulsion: diesels-electric reduction gear with four Fairbanks-Morse main

generator engines., 5,400 hp, four Elliot Motor Co., main motors with 2,740 hp, two 126-cell main storage batteries, two propellers. Fuel Capacity: 94,400 gal.

Royal and Royal Australian Navies strike again £60m blow to terrorist drugs trade

THE combination of a Royal Navy and an Australian warship have delivered a £60m blow to international terrorism – the second major bust in a month.



HMAS DARWIN helicopter

[Pictures: Courtesy of Royal Australian Navy]

Just three weeks after the largest heroin seizure on the high seas in history – more than a tonne of the drug – HMAS DARWIN again pounced on a dhow in the Indian Ocean. The vessel was found in international waters, some 40 miles off Somalia during a concerted operation by Combined Task Force 150.

The CTF is directed at disrupting drug trafficking in the Indian Ocean – profits from the illegal trade are known to provide funding for terrorist organisations including Al Qaeda and the Taliban. The task force has dealt seven blows to that illegal trade this year alone, the latest of which came when the Australian frigate intercepted the suspect vessel. HMAS DARWIN's boarding team subsequently discovered heroin hidden in 20 bags, each weighing between 20 and 25 kilogrammes. The total haul came to 449kg – with a street value of just over £60m.



HMAS DARWIN's team intercept dhow

[Pictures: Courtesy of Royal Australian Navy]

The seizure removed a major source of funding for terrorist and criminal networks. HMS SOMERSET and HMAS DARWIN, the major vessels in the CTF150 team have accounted for more than £200m of heroin being seized in the past month; in late April DARWIN bagged the largest ever haul of heroin on the high seas, 1,032kg – worth more than £140m on the streets.

The Christmas Convoy 1811.

The note I recently wrote on weather and war at sea faded from my mind until yesterday afternoon, when laid up in bed with the flu, for here Gentlemen 'tis indeed a 'sickly season'.

During the wars against General Bonaparte who styled himself 'emperor', the French and their minions and vassals established an embargo on trade with these islands. However, the Baltic was essential to British interests, especially for Swedish timber- the slight unpleasantness between Nelson and the Danish fleet off Copenhagen being well recorded of course, and Imperial Russia was a wild card. British convoys to and from the Baltic were large, well armed and well escorted.

So it was on December 17th 1811, that a convoy of some 170+ British merchantmen and a dozen men o'war set sail from Sweden, having been delayed by storms of immense ferocity. After only two days at sea, another awesome gale struck, and the convoy was split. Some ships pressed on, the others with escorts turned back. The storms continued relentlessly, and when the remaining half of the great convoy attempted to get through the sounds and into the North Sea, disaster struck. Several merchants were lost, and among the escort the first rate 98 gun warship HMS St. George under Admiral Reynolds was driven ashore off Jutland and of the 870 or so men aboard only some eight hands survived. Her consort HMS Defence- 74 guns also ran aground and lost all but half a dozen of her crew.

The struggle into the storm swept North Sea didn't end the convoy's troubles, HMS Hero- 74 guns was driven ashore off the Texel in Bonaparte's Dutch territories, with the loss of all but seven or eight of her complement and the little brig-sloop HMS Grasshopper going to Hero's aid also grounded and the crew was captured. That vessel served as 'Irene' in the remnant of the French navy for the remainder of the wars. The convoy losses were substantial.

An ideal solo wargame if you count the sea and the storms as worthy opponents! Can I recommend C.S Forrester's magnificent novel 'The Commodore' to anyone who might fancy the attempt. Of course neither the French nor the Danes came out to meet the convoy.

Rob Morgan

Ekranoplan.

By Rob Morgan.

The 'Old Crow' list contains more than just suitable, and very, no ultra-modern warship types. It has a couple of oddities too. I think I first encountered this interesting craft back in the early eighties when a drawing and some tentative data appeared in Captain John Moore's *'Warships of the Soviet Navy'* published by Jane's, naturally.

The 300 ton Ekranoplan, described as a **W-I-G** (or wing-in-ground) effect craft, around 400' long and with a wingspan of about 125', it was said to be able to carry 900 troops, with a payload of 90 tons. The 'Caspian Sea Monster' as *"War Machine"* (No.134 page 2668) called it a few years later, was a wide-bodied, airliner type, with 8 or 10 gas turbines capable of moving her at 300knots, on which remarkable speed both sources agreed!

Several versions of the **W-I-G** were being developed by the Soviet Navy as prototypes, including, according to Moore *"ASW, Minesweeping and Patrol craft"*, this as well as the obvious potential for amphibious assault and logistical support where the larger Ekranoplan was concerned.

These other types were smaller, a similar concept, but with a single turboprop aft, augmented by two gas turbines internally mounted, wider wingspan compared to body length, and the potential to be used as a missile attack craft, one prototype having been given two SS-N-22 anti-ship missiles in containers.

So what? Says the modern wargamer.

Did it happen?

Well, the same issue of Jane's contained a note and artist's impression of the enormous *'Typhoon'* Class SSBN, an intriguing note full of 'possibly's', 'probably's' and endless '?' as to dimensions and weaponry! The *'Kirov'*, *'Sovremeny's'* were just as full of '?'s though there were photo's of both. While the CVN, described as *'...a logical continuation'* had less of a description than most of the elderly escorts!

I thought it worth modelling an example, given the fact that these craft caused such consternation and thought amongst western experts for a decade

or more. 'Old Crow's list has a very suitable model. In approximately 1/600 or 1/700th scale (yes the model's described as 1/300th, but....) there's C6801 in the list, an 'armoured dropship' at £6.

A hefty bit of resin, over 135mm (5 and a half inches) long. It will serve as an Ekranoplan of the larger type with ease, though you'll need to add a tail-fin from almost any 1/144th scale jet, the upper 20mm or so will do, cemented centrally over the broad tail. Known detail, to say the least, obscure, but using a few odds and ends from the 'DRAGON' 1/700th (pack 7011) Soviet 'Air-Cushion Landing Crafts' I made my 'operational prototype' fit in with the big '*Pomornik*' and '*Aist*' in the set.

Looks good- very unusual as a target maybe a bit vulnerable.

Unfortunately, since I first penned this previously unpublished little note for AGB's then editor Mel Spence back in 2012, the highly suitable 1/300th scale 'sea-skimmer' in the Old Crow Range, which would have made a delightful smaller Ekranoplan has been discontinued, but it may re-emerge in the production list at some later stage.

Old Crow are at www.oldcrowmodels.co.uk

Never Again?

That splendid journal 'The Navy' from which the Sea Quiz which I must say has been generously, if not uncritically, received, always astounds me when I dip into it. One question back in 1953 asked for the names of warships which due to tragic loss or disaster have never been re-used. In modern terms of course, it's difficult to imagine another HMS Hood, HMS Royal Oak or another HMS Affray appearing in the Navy list. However, there were several 'amazed of Portsmouth' letters from retired RN officers, when the answers were published. Of course, the list said the unknown compiler was not intended to be exhaustive!

Well he would wouldn't he!

I was much taken with a letter from W.T.Ash RN Lt (Ret'd) who joined the service in July 1880 (!), seventy three years previously, and who mentioned the loss in rapid succession, of two ships with the same name. HMS Wasp a screw gunboat of 465 tons was lost off Tory Island in a storm in 1884, but another screw gunboat given the same name almost immediately after that, vanished in 1887 after leaving Singapore, and was never heard of again. The name wasn't used again, but presumably the second Wasp acquired that name because there was little or no loss of life in the Tory Island wrecking?

A question occurs to me which is little more than naval ephemera really. Is there a rule or a guide in terms of warship losses and warship names?

Ticonderoga Class Cruisers.

A couple of months ago, I was in the Ian Allen shop at Cardiff, and at a decent £3.99, I picked up a 1/1250th scale model of *USS Vincennes (CG 49)* one of the 'Hobby Boss' range of kits, there are several other box names from the same class, but essentially it's the same model. A nice waterline kit with the lower hull and a stand separate, no helicopters sadly and in case those of you with a positive attitude to the world's largest navy (at present) are interested, this will be the basis for a Science Fiction model, and the upturned hull base will be a submarine.

I recall a mention of this Class of Cruisers in '*Sea Breezes*' last Spring, and looked it out. The *Hue City (CG 66)* arrived in dock for a \$24 US refit and part of it would deal with the 'slight instability' in heavy seas for which the class (apparently) are renowned.

Nothing special, but possibly a wargames point, there.

However, a recent issue of the magazine reports immense US fleet cutbacks will see no fewer than nine of the *Ticonderoga*'s withdrawn from service by the end of 2014. *USS's Normandy (CG60)*, *Anzio (CG 68)*, *Vicksburg (CG 69)*, *Cape St. George (CG 71)*, and *USS's Princeton (CG 59)*, *Cowpens (CG 63)*, *Gettysburg (CG 64)*, *Chosin (CG 65)* and of course the 'un-refitted' *USS Hue City* mentioned earlier. Three of the *Whidbey Island* Class dock landing ships will also go shortly.

It's a delightful source of up to date information is the Naval Focus page of "*Sea Breezes*" and worth a glance on the shelves at Smith's.

Rob Morgan.

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A Couple of Modern Soviet AGI's in 1/1200th Scale.

By Rob Morgan.

I wanted a couple of small, inexpensive Soviet '*Auxiliary General Intelligence Collectors*' as NATO used to call them in the old days. Not really to 'beef-up' a game, but to add some broader interest to my ageing Red Navy in the 1/1200th scale. To be honest the price of most decent models in this scale is now astronomical, and I've not added much to Admiral Gorshkov's boys in the scale for a long, long time.

I found what I wanted in Mick Yarrow Miniatures 1/1200th list.....

- 1343-Fishing Boat 1890-1950.....£1.50.
- 1344-Small Fishing Boat x 2 1890-1950.....£1.50.

The larger ship-1343, is a little under 40mm long, and will ,with little effort, represent the 130' long Soviet '*Lentra*' Class AGI in 1/1200th scale. I used Captain Moore's excellent, if now venerable 'The Soviet Navy Today', and his 'Warships of the Soviet Navy' for the necessary references.

So, off we go.

The hull needs little work, beyond a light file smoothing perhaps; the basic layout of the model and of the seven strong class, built in East German yards from 1957-63,is very much the same. I reduced the older style, steamship funnel by 2mm,and then drilled two holes in the hull, along the centre line, the first 8mm from the bow, just in front of the forward hatch cover. The second hole, just a little aft of the funnel, and 8mm from the stern. Into each I cemented a length of pin, with the small round head remaining at the top, the forward length being 15mm, and the rearmost 'mast' being 12mm high.

Along the hatches from the foremast, I cemented a very thin length of sprue 6mm long, for a lowered boom. On the port side, alongside the midships hatch, the '*Lentra's*' carried a launch, and for this I used a small boat from one of the salvaged 'Airfix' 1/1200th plastics (The 'Cossack's' are good sources for these) in the spares box. Any very small boat will do here, and that's it.

The seven strong Class, numbered **GS-34,36,41,43,46,47**,and **55** were in-area rather than deep sea boats, and still in service as late as 1982.They had a

top speed (!) of 11knots from their 400hp diesel engine, and a fair range of 7,000 miles (12,700 km) at 9 knots. I sprayed mine mid-grey, with off white funnel, superstructure, boats and small pennants either side of the bow.

Invest in another of these and try your hand at the Civilian operated (or so they said!) Hydromet Research Vessel **MGLA**. Virtually the same dimensions, and about 290 tons. A little more work on the second type of AGI (alleged). File the midships hatch flat, and reduce the funnel height as before. A sliver of plasticard 5mm long, about 3mm wide and 2mm high should be cemented over the site of the flattened hatch.

Drill for two masts, the foremast centrally 15mm from the bow, and 18mm high, with pin-head still in place. The second after mast was exactly as for the '*Lentra*'. I added the dropped boom over the new superstructure, which covers the hold, and a small raft forwards on the remaining hatch. She was capable of 8.5 knots, and painted off-white overall, with a red band around the funnel.

Since I had two of the smaller fishing vessels 1344, to hand, I wondered if I could utilise them with the Red Banner Fleet? Yes! The two vessel class of *Daldyn* tenders, which came into service in the early 1970's were converted from the Karelia design of trawler, and are only 100' long overall. Since 1344 is 26mm long, it will serve nicely in scale. Again, I tidied up a little with the file, and this time since the two '*Daldyn*'s' have a relatively high superstructure for their size, I left bridge and funnel alone. But flattened off the stern a little to lose the small ship's boat; replacing it with a sliver of plastic, to represent machinery.

Next drill a hole centrally 6mm from the now, and cement a 10mm length of pin in it. Immediately behind the funnel, drill another hole and cement a 7mm pin into that. Spray overall mid-grey, and one of the two has or had 763 in white at the bows.

There we are, five pounds and four additions to the 1/1200th Red Fleet.

Rob Morgan.
Easter 2014.

One of my interests is naval ordnance, and the "Journal of the Ordnance Society", published annually, often comes up with some good wargames related material. In Volume 22 which has just arrived there's an illustrated article by Ruth Rhynas Brown entitled 'Guns for Merchant Shipping', it's an introduction to the ordnance carried aboard merchant ships from the 1500's to the 1900's, which is as she says ' a surprisingly

neglected topic'. For every naval battle fought there were a hundred encounters with privateers or pirates on the high seas. This, by its content is likely to be the first in a lengthy series of responses to the study of the use of cannon aboard merchant ships; it interested me to learn that Post Office packets as late as the 1850's carried 1/2pdr swivel guns for defence!

Rob Morgan

A Glance into “*The Mariner’s Mirror*.”

I’m not sure how many members of NWS, or indeed readers of AGB are also members of the Society for Nautical Research, but most people reading this note will be aware of the venerable quarterly journal the SNR produces, now in its hundredth year of publication. Volume 100, Number 2, for May 2014 is a very good issue for the naval wargamer and the naval historian alike, for several reasons.....

An article entitled ‘*Between Shoal and Wall: The Naval Bombardment of Akko 1840*’, pp 147-167 written by Kahanov, Stern *et al*, is a splendid account of the attack on Egyptian held Acre (as it’s still much better known!) by a combined fleet of eight ships of the line, six frigates and four smaller vessels, plus four steamers, Austrian, British and Turkish vessels commanded by Admiral Stopford, on November 3rd 1840.

The article is in fact a detailed ballistic, and technically inspired, close examination of the bombardment and its effects. The major instrument of the attack was of course the splendid 32pdr smoothbore cannon, a number of the missiles fired by which guns remain embedded in Acre’s (I can’t bring myself to write Akko!!!) walls and buildings.

Interestingly, the consideration of velocity, impact and trajectory lead the researchers to believe that the bombardment took place at very much closer range than previously thought, with much manoeuvring and skilled seamanship by the British men o’ war. It’s a fascinating article, and I really can’t recall the last time I saw or was involved in a game which included bombardment as a major factor, beyond the ACW, of course.

A second substantial wargame gives the opportunity for a map or table top encounter involving the Battle of the Atlantic ‘with a difference’. “*The Italian Naval War in the Mid-Atlantic: Blockade Runners and Submarines in the Canary islands 1940-1943*” (pages 186-197) written by Juan Jose Bentiez, a Spanish historian, deals with the fascinating story of the Canaries at war, or not since they were in Franco’s hands, but the Italians, the *Kriegsmarine*, Royal Navy, the French and the Spanish fleets all had a hand in the clandestine and sometimes open naval war around the coast of Africa. There’s immense potential for a campaign here, a raid into Tenerife to eliminate Italian blockade runners, or supply tankers for U-Boats, there were as

many as seventeen Italian merchant ships and tankers moored in the Canaries in 1940. Or the potential of an attack before 'Torch' to prevent a threat from submarines against the landing ships, and a host of smaller actions all offer themselves, from the interesting text. Highly readable, a totally confusing and potentially explosive scenario or three; and only the incompetence of the Italian Naval High Command made it 'unfruitful' as Benitez states.

A decent note, pages 208- 217, on the folding and unfolding of galley masts, in the early modern (or as we knew it in my undergraduate days- Renaissance) galley. There's a lengthy illustrated account of when and how this might have been achieved, and frankly it does leave a few questions which might cause a galley wargamer, such as I, to pause for thought in the matter of his model ships.

A couple of decent reviews too, "*Weapons of Warre*", volume 3 by the Mary Rose Trust deals with the cannon and the personal weapons of the crew and would seem to be a much sought after rarity as a set of books and a DVD. A hefty volume entitled '*Naval Weapons of WWI*' a Seaforth title, by Professor Norman Freidman is criticised by the reviewer, but seems to cover the major players at sea, and the neutrals too. I've not yet seen the book (it's £45, by the way!) but it hits more targets than it misses if the reviewer is correct. The '*Mirror*' always reviews immensely expensive books and at a mere £59.50, there's "*Air and Sea Power in WWI*" by M.Philpot from Tuaris of London, described as 'ambitious.' Other titles reviewed deal with the Malta Convoys, Churchill and the Navy and a Boydell title on the War of Spanish Succession.

A very good issue this time, and worth looking out for!

Rob Morgan.
May 2014.

This from Todd Kauderer.

For Rob Morgan and his hunt for a Fort Drum, the board game Axis & Allies War at Sea has a very nice Fort Drum in 1:1800 scale. It is usually found on eBay and currently listed as: "WAR AT SEA SURFACE ACTION SET HEAVY SHORE BATTERY 40/40"

http://www.ebay.com/itm/380903660837?_trksid=p2055119.m1438.l2649&ssPageName=STRK%3AMEBIDX%3AIT

It paints up nicely and the two turrets even rotate. I use it for my 1:2400 scale battles and it works fine.



And for NWS Members - when you get to San Diego there are a number of naval sites to see. Besides the USS Midway aircraft carrier museum be sure to see HMS Surprise, the frigate from the movie "Master and Commander." Originally built as HMS Rose, a 28 gun frigate from the American Revolution, she used to operate out of the port of Newport, Rhode Island until bought for the movie. Supposedly she is on loan to the museum under the condition she be available to do future movies.

NAVY RECORDS SOCIETY.

The Navy Records Society's new online site is fully active at www.navyrecordsonline.co.uk the sections of the site deal with among other things, materiel and weapons, policy and strategy, tactics and operations. It's worth taking a look at, and full membership of the NRS comes at £20 a year I understand.

Rob Morgan

Artful enters the water

Britain's third £1 billion Astute Class nuclear submarine, Artful, was lowered into the water at Barrow-in-Furness on Saturday, 17 May.



Artful on the shiplift [Picture: Copyright © 2014 BAE Systems. All rights reserved]

‘A Dog Before A Soldier’.

An unusual naval book reviewed by Rob Morgan.

For a reason I still don't quite understand, this book, *'A Dog Before a Soldier'*, by Chuck Veit, published 2010, by Lulu.com (ISBN 978-0-557-37497-7), was reviewed and mauled in *'The Mariner's Mirror'* recently. Having access to a review copy, and having examined and read it, the book has turned out to be a different, and very, very entertaining trip into the naval history, and the little known actions and activities of the Federal Navy during the War between the States. It's written not by a professional historian, but by a re-enactor. Chuck Veit is President of the 'Navy & Marine Living History Association', and the two hundred page, exceptionally well illustrated and mapped book is the result of years of 'active' research. The six page Bibliography contains much in the way of primary sources especially, of which I was not aware, but America based members of the NWS may well be more familiar with them.

The title comes from a sailor's statement of loyalties.....

“A mess-mate before a ship-mate, a ship-mate before a stranger, a stranger before a dog, and a dog before a soldier.”

..... and is subtitled 'Almost-lost episodes in the U.S.Navy's Civil War.'

Some are more 'lost' than others! Nine episodes are recounted by the author, and in all but one or two cases, these can provide the background scenario for a naval wargame, and in some cases a wargame of a very unusual format. Several I will return to at a later stage, as table-top wargame scenarios, the models are readily available, after all!

The book opens with a naval encounter which is far better known to the ACW land wargamer, the Battle of Shiloh, in which two Union Gunboats, *USS's Lexington* and *Tyler* played a critical role. Next, Viet deals with the encounter at Hampton Roads, rarely referred to as a battle of course, but that's what it was before the monitor turned up, this is a different approach to the first ironclad sea-fight.

One or two of the chapters in the book, and each has a detailed set of supporting notes, and drawings of use to the naval wargame enthusiast, stand out as being of remarkable interest. I'd never heard anyone mention 'The Raid that Wasn't' until I read this; the Federal plan, involving twelve warships, including *USS's Port Royal*, *Jacob Bell*, *Galena* and the *USS Monitor*, to destroy the Petersburg Bridge and limit supplies reaching Richmond. Since this was in support of the unfortunate Union General McClellan, odds must have been on failure!

The next chapter is equally fascinating and though it would require a little more thought, as a war game it has huge potential...."The Great Navy Cattle Drive", the

astonishing and vigorous activities along the unpacified Mississippi after New Orleans fell to Farragut in the Spring of 1862. The account of 'The Navy at Fort Butler' which follows, is perhaps less easy to transpose, but the lively activity of a single man o' war, *USS Port Royal*, a captured blockade runner, and a small landing party or two, does offer some potential.

The 'Battle of the Straits of Shimonoseki' took place in July 1863, and again the action of a single warship *USS Wyoming*, engaged in hunting the *CSS Alabama* off the coast of Japan, provides so much for the naval wargamer. Another scenario, neatly mapped and precisely described in the text, to return to.

The Federals didn't have it all their own way on the great rivers. The 1864 Red River Campaign provided an ambush of potentially immense implications for the large steamer squadron of 'tinclads, under Admiral Porter which was 'ambushed' at Deloges Bluff in convoy down the river after the better known engagement in which *USS Eastport* was destroyed. This is a good 'gauntlet running' action, and proves that shore attacks on warships in confined waters can be successful- to an extent. The penultimate chapter, 'The Raid on Pitch Landing' deals with the numerous raids carried out by the US Navy against Confederate supply bases inland from Albermarle Sound, small steamers were involved such as *USS Chicopee*, as well as Picket Boats and numbers of US Marines for shore operations. Very interesting actions, small scale and reminiscent of Hornblower and Aubrey in the wars against Bonaparte! The last of the nine actions is a trek, rather than a voyage, 'A Novel Naval Scout' deals with the attempts of a group of sailors to reach Sherman with news of the capture of Wilmington, not a wargame in our terms, but it just goes to show what navies can do, when asked.

The book ends with an assessment of the Federal Navy's role in winning the Civil War for the Union, the blockade, and the fall of New Orleans being particularly examined. Veit concludes with a statement which might find sympathetic reception among many ACW wargamers, on land and afloat....."while the Navy alone could not have won the war, the Union Army alone would almost surely have lost it."

An excellent well written and well produced volume; but unlikely to find its way onto the shelves of many British bookshops, but worth reading, and in my case worth returning to as a wargamer.

Britain at Sea - Radio 4 programme aired this week.

Admiral Lord West's history of the Royal Navy since 1900. Lord West tells the story of Britain and the Royal Navy in the turbulent twentieth century. Taking in political, social and technological developments, Lord West traces the many ways in which the Royal Navy was influenced by, and influenced, wider historical currents – from the place of women in society to Middle Eastern oil.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/podcasts/series/britainsea>

Simon Stokes

SIGNAL PAD!

Naval Wargames Weekend, 2014 – Try and get there.

The Naval Wargames Society and the Explosion Museum of Naval Firepower are holding the fourth weekend of naval wargaming at the museum in Gosport over the weekend of June 21st and 22nd 2014. The emphasis of the event is on games and getting together, and a high standard has been set in previous years. Volunteers run games at the event. Plenty of space and tables are available and there should be room for upwards of ten tables available of varying sizes. Space is available in the museum grounds for camping over the weekend.

The aim of the event is to provide a forum where naval (and other) gamers can come together to run and/or play in each others' games. Games can be as long or as short as you like, with a few participation games so that members of the public can join in too.

The Annual General Meeting of the Naval Wargames Society will be held on Saturday late afternoon at the Explosion Museum. Previous experience leads me to say that it should not be too long or arduous. It is your chance to have your say on any matter.

Contact details for the Explosion Museum are as follows:

Explosion! Museum of Naval Firepower
Heritage Way
Priddy's Hard
Gosport
Hampshire
PO12 4LE
United Kingdom

Telephone: 023 9250 5600

Fax: 023 9250 5605

Mobile: 077 8741 5382

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