



All Guns Blazing!

Newsletter of the Naval Wargames Society

No. 242 – DECEMBER 2014

EDITORIAL

It's that time of year again when you may treat yourself to something in the War gaming line if no one else is going to buy it for you. Perhaps you could write a few words reviewing that new acquisition for AGB? Last January sales, I treated myself to a laptop. It came with Windows 8. My Desktop is getting too slow and I've decided to bite the bullet and produce January's AGB using WORD 2013 and Windows 8. So it's goodbye to Windows XP and Word 2007. Wish me luck. I think I'm going to need it.

Naval Wargamers can avoid the sometimes high cost of model terrain used in other branches of the hobby. All we need is a flat surface. Getting started in the hobby at a reasonable cost is a good way to see if you like it before graduating to models and / or boxed games. There are free rules available on the Web. You could always draw up your own of course. This AGB contains a few words from Rob Morgan on how naval war gaming can be achieved for minimal outlay. Some Games are reasonably priced and remember imagination is free.

Welcome to new members, John Curran, Scott Belcher and Eric Rochard.

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

Norman Bell



Dec. 14, 1911 - The fleet base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, was ceremonially opened when the armored cruiser *USS California* (ACR 6) steamed through the channel.



Pearl Harbor 7th December 1941.



141121-N-CB621-035 PEARL HARBOR (Nov. 21, 2014) The Los Angeles-class, fast attack submarine USS Columbia (SSN 771) moors pier side as she returns to Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam following a six-month scheduled deployment to the western Pacific region. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Jason Swink/Released)



The *Independence*-class light aircraft carrier *USS Belleau Wood* (CVL-24), dark and in her war paint, near Hunters Point in 1945.



USS Cleveland CL-55 1942. The US Navy wanted 40 to 50 of these hardy little cruisers. They settled for far fewer, and nine of those became aircraft carriers while still under construction when the need for carriers became obvious. The first of the class was laid down originally as the cruiser *Amsterdam* but commissioned instead as the *USS Independence*, on 14 January 1943. Over the next nine months, eight sisters followed, roughly one every 45 days on average. A testament to the capabilities of USA Shipyards. The third of the class, originally laid down as the light cruiser *New Haven* (CL-76) just four months before, "Pearl Harbor", was stripped of that name and hull number and commissioned instead as the *USS Belleau Wood* (CV-24) on 31 March 1943.

SEA QUIZ 37...answers.

____ The answers to these questions raised several memories on the subject of the RNVR Divisions and the choice of names. Question 6, amazingly, seems to have offended a couple of 'foreign' readers (not Admiral Gorshkov); but I thought this man was simply a pirate? So did many of the old RN people by the way!

1. HMS Fancy went to Belgium of course.
2. This was the International Mine Clearance Organisation.
3. HMS Vanguard replaced HMS Indomitable.
4. Japan was given 68 US warships to rebuild a fleet.
5. HMS Cressy was the Tay Division.
6. John Paul Jones, who fought the Turks for the Tsar off Crimea.

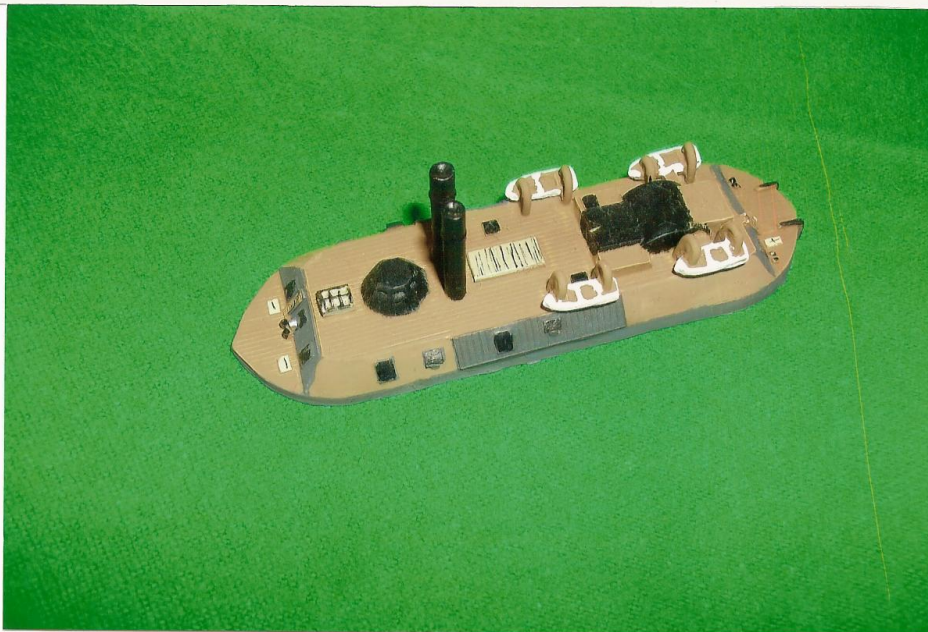
USS Cairo. 1862.

The splendid US ordnance journal *'The Artilleryman'* recently carried an illustrated article on the subject of the ongoing restoration project of what is described as *'the most complete restoration of a Civil War period ironclad'*. The 'Cairo' is displayed at a museum in Vicksburg, but sadly though the writer, Robert H. Gregory provides some sumptuous photographs of the work, and of the 42pdr rifles and 32pdr smoothbores with which the raised warship has been re-armed, it stops short of a detailed description of the project, and the ship. The main reference, one I'd not heard of is *'Hardluck Ironclad: the sinking and salvage of the Cairo'* by Edwin C. Bearss, published at Baton Rouge in 1964, and probably long out of print.

Of course USS Caro wasn't the only one of her class of seven Eads gunboats to sink after hitting a mine, the article doesn't mention USS St. Louis, which was mined and sank in the Yazoo in July 1863. I wondered if there was a project in relation to this ship?

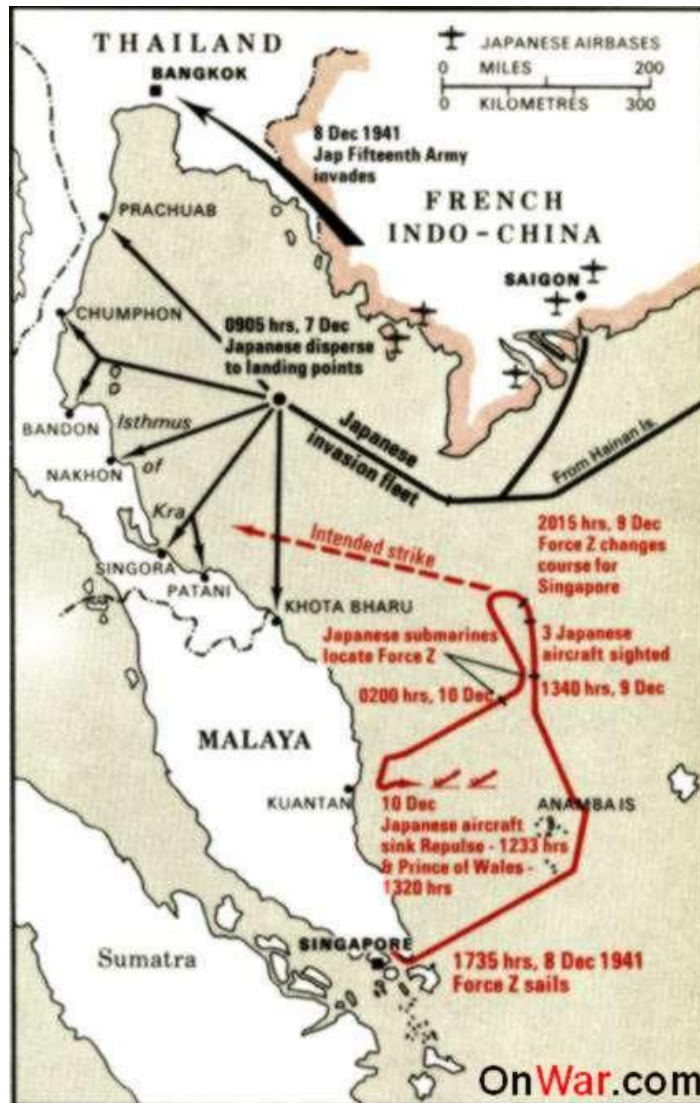
Rob Morgan.

Here's a photograph of my Eads gunboat (1/600th Peter Pig) carefully avoiding mines.



December 1941.

The British Battleship *Prince of Wales* and Battlecruiser *Repulse* were sent to Singapore by Churchill to provide a deterrent to Japanese aggression. Too little; but nothing else was available and too late. The Japanese were already committed. Sailing from Singapore, Force Z was ordered to attack the Japanese invasion forces in Malaya; they were discovered by a Japanese submarine and later sunk within hours by an air strike involving about 90 planes.



Without an accompanying carrier, (HMS INDOMITABLE was absent due to the need for repairs); Force Z sailed from Singapore, (to avoid being bombed at anchor; fearing what could have been a mini Pearl Harbor), in an attempt to destroy or disrupt the Japanese invasion fleet. The Ships' presence in theatre had failed to be a deterrent to Japanese plans; they were only a target. The attack on Pearl Harbor and the subsequent sinking of HMS PRINCE OF WALES and HMS REPULSE proved beyond doubt that the day of the Battleship was over.



Loss of HMS *Prince of Wales* and HMS *Repulse*, 10 December 1941

Photograph taken from a Japanese plane, with *Prince of Wales* at far left and *Repulse* beyond her. A destroyer, either *Express* or *Electra*, is maneuvering in the foreground. Dulin and Garzke's "Allied Battleships in World War II", page 199, states that this photograph was taken "after the first torpedo attack, during which the *Prince of Wales* sustained heavy torpedo damage."

Official U.S. Navy Photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives.

In the evening of the **9th**, Force Z was well up into the South China Sea. Japanese aircraft were spotted and now that they were discovered, Admiral Phillips decided to return to Singapore. Around midnight he received a false report of landings at Kuantan, further down the Malay Peninsular and set course for there. The ships had by now been reported by a submarine, and a naval aircraft strike force was despatched from Indochina. Attacks started around 11.00 on the **10th** December, and in less than three hours "PRINCE OF WALES" and "REPULSE" had been hit by a number of torpedoes and sent to the bottom.

Photo # NH 60566 Attack on Prince of Wales & Repulse, 10 Dec. 1941



This photograph was taken from a Japanese aircraft during the initial high-level bombing attack. *Repulse*, near the bottom of the view, has just been hit by one bomb and near-missed by several more. *Prince of Wales* is near the top of the image, generating a considerable amount of smoke. Japanese writing in the lower right states that the photograph was reproduced by authorization of the Navy Ministry.

Donation of Mr. Theodore Hutton, 1942.

U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command Photograph.

Most of you will have seen Simon's excellent article "Carnage in the South China Sea" available on the Scenario page of the NWS Website. Enough war gaming info there to keep you going for ages. If you have a few pennies to spare you may wish to consider Minden Games' cheap and cheerful "Destruction of Force Z". It is one of several games from Minden which will not take all weekend to play; unless you play several times searching for the strategy that will provide that elusive win. Cost can be even lower if you choose the PDF version of any of their games. They are great for filling an hour or so, or for a non expensive introduction to a new subject within naval war gaming. Minden's motto is, "Games meant to be fun; games meant to be played".

MINDEN's DESTRUCTION OF FORCE Z

One of Minden's naval games is the, "Destruction of Force Z". Everything you need is in the ziplock bag except dice but there is no reason why you can not substitute your own miniatures and table top, for the card Ship Counters and small map of the Malaya coast/Gulf of Siam/South China Sea if you wish. You play as the Commander of Force Z, there is the opportunity to include aircraft carrier HMS INDOMITABLE for "what if" games. Game mechanics and lady luck control the timing and location of the Japanese Battle Fleet, troop carriers, and submarines and (hopefully not) land based air strikes. So there are ample variations to try out strategies and to find out whether or not air cover for the RN Ships would have made a difference. Whatever you do, you are up against it, (and rightly so, there's a Japanese fleet out there, submarines and an air force) so a victory of any sort will give a feeling of satisfaction and probably smugness.

Replay. HMS INDOMITABLE is available this time. Sailing at dusk on 8th December, my plan is to head North East then North West in a left hook to surprise the Japanese at Khota Bharu. Hit fast and hard and then return to the, "safety", of Singapore. This has the advantage of avoiding the suspected mine field and where intelligence reports put the submarine picket line. Unfortunately this route makes discovery by arial recon more likely. Strict radio silence is enforced.



Battle Cruiser HMS REPULSE



Battleship HMS PRINCE OF WALES

Overnight, reports of Japanese landings at Singora are received. The position of enemy ships is unknown but hinted at by the landings at Singora. Dawn brings an end to the overcast weather and it is now clear. On the British ships all eyes are on the skies, watching for enemy reconnaissance aircraft as best speed towards Kota Bharu is maintained.

In the afternoon of the 9th December, the weather remains clear. No intelligence on the location of enemy ships is received. Unknown to the British, a Japanese submarine has sighted the British and radioed course and speed details to Indo-China. Bombers scramble in an attempt to make an attack before nightfall. HMS INDOMITABLE has Sea Hurricanes onboard. Just as well, as the British are found by 24 Torpedo Bombers and 6 high level Bombers. The Hurricanes shoot down 3 Torpedo Bombers and disrupt the attack runs of 10 more. 2 Hurricanes are lost; all level bombers and 11 Torpedo aircraft attack. The 6 level Bombers and 2 Torpedo aircraft attack REPULSE. 9 Torpedo aircraft attack PRINCE OF WALES. The anti-aircraft fire of REPULSE and two Destroyers shoot down 1 Torpedo Bomber. All bombs miss as does the torpedo. PRINCE OF WALES is not so lucky. 1 Torpedo aircraft is shot down but torpedoes find their mark and POW receives crippling damage. Fires, a list and speed reduced to 10 knots.

Overnight 9th/10th Dec. The RN Ships have turned for Singapore, in the darkness damage control put out the fires. Engine room damage means that POW speed is permanently reduced and the Ships stay together in an effort to protect POW.

Morning 10th Dec. To British dismay, the weather is clear. Amazingly and to the relief of the sailors, a Japanese airstrike fails to locate the retreating British. No intelligence on the location of Japanese surface units but the RN vessels are not now thinking of making an attack, just getting to the, "safety", of Singapore.

Afternoon 10th Dec. The weather is no friend to the British with clear blue skies from horizon to horizon. Singapore radios the latest intelligence on the location of Japanese cruisers - far away. The British ships still have radio silence as land based air cover could not get there in time and they are still trying to reach Singapore undetected. Therefore Singapore is blissfully unaware of the dire straits of the British Ships. After an enemy reconnaissance aircraft is seen, the sailors know what will be coming next. Sure enough, the Sea Hurricanes intercept level bombers and shoot down 5 for the loss of 2 of their own. The surviving bombers press home the attack and hit HMS REPULSE.

A Japanese submarine picket line is between the British ships and Singapore and a surface fleet is somewhere closing from behind. Can a defeat be stopped from becoming a total / major disaster? You will have to try for yourself. Definitely no victory smugness this time.

To sum up; the twelve page rule book covers the movement and combat rules. There are several tables covering air to air, air to ship, torpedo attacks, optional rules and random events. The rules are fairly simple and straight forward but I did have to read the air to air combat paragraph several times before it sunk in. The player aid card contains the combat tables (so you do not have to continually flick through the rule book) and the time/turn record track. The game ends on 12th December but I'm sure many games will be played and end in a Japanese victory before either a British victory or the end of the time line is reached and victory points are counted.

Wargame Ships for Next to Nothing.

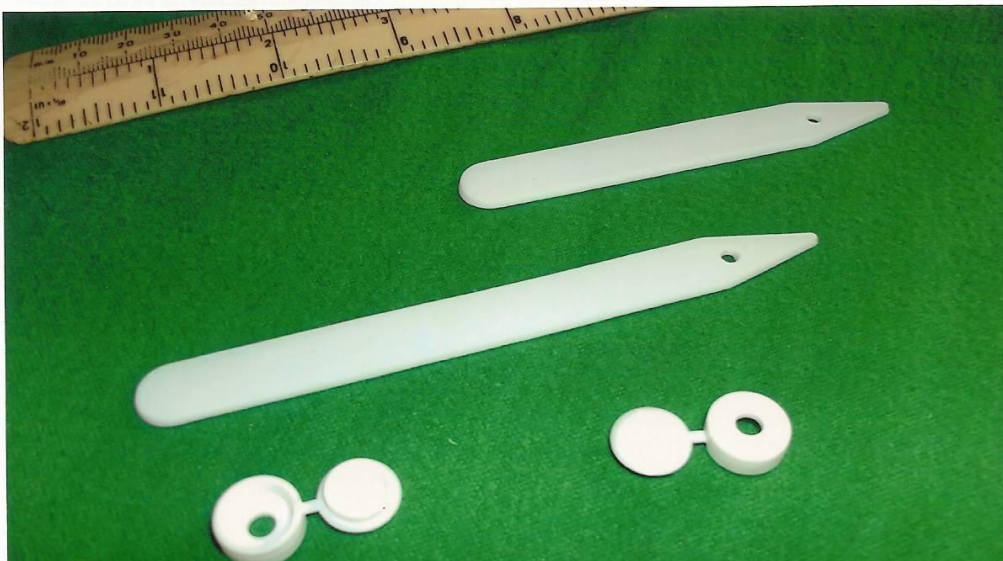
Or....'Just in case you get bored with all those Dreadnoughts'.

Now as you'll see from the photograph, I haven't actually finished modelling these splendid craft. That will take a little more thought, but obviously a funnel, a small pilot house, maybe a light deck gun, ship's boat, that sort of thing. All needed to complete a very cheap plastic war game model.

If you drop into Wilkinson's (It says WILKO on the front these days), the High Street store, and take a look in the gardening section you'll notice that they are selling off the old stock....Winter is coming. I bought two packets of Plant Markers, the long-ish plastic things you write Latin names on and stick in pots in the garden. They come in two lengths, medium is 90mm long and long is 120mm, both are 12 mm wide. Each pack of 50 labels cost me 20p. Guess what, they're ship shaped!

Perfect hulls....and another thought came to mind, walking around the store to the household DIY section (my wife wasn't with me- so no danger of any rash purchase at all) I picked up a pack of plastic screw covers, at 99p for twenty. These are 12mm in diameter, and stand 4mm high. Perfect turrets.....

All are hard plastic and will take polystyrene cement. The turrets and hulls together will make decent Monitors, one two or three turreted. The covers can be used in a variety of ways. With the lids cemented on as standard roofed



turrets, slightly domed, so maybe with an awning? Or a meshed roof. Upside down, with the 4mm diameter screw hole at the top, an open gun house, or a small piece of sprue could be cemented on top as a pilot house? I won't insult you with offerings of a choice of funnels, but of course the open 2mm 'hole', at the sharp (let's call it the bow) end could be left open or covered with a small hatch, whatever takes your fancy. Deck houses from small blocks of plasticard or odd bits of oblong or square sprue, maybe?

A single boat on the deck right aft, from the Sky Wave small (or large) ship's ordnance and odds and sods set, plenty in each, maybe a searchlight on top of the turret, a jack staff's no problem, nor are flying bridge – walkways between the turrets. Or a ship's gun from the Peter Pig range, these do look about 1/600th-ish to me, roughly speaking. Or a couple of Mr Pig's boats on davits possibly? Using some of the excellent 'Tumbling Dice' deck guns, to make anti-torpedo boat guns on the turret tops is another option, go wild and add a real ship's mast amidships, or two long pins cemented on a 6mm plastic square at the bow for torpedoes?

The 'hulls' and for 40p you'll have a hundred of them, could be used in an even less sophisticated form, simply by using a marker, permanent or not, to mark gun positions on each, and a funnel, with the ensign, ships' name or number or points value at the stern perhaps.

That's just my idea so far. I wonder, and I really don't have any idea, if these screw covers come in other sizes than 12mm? Screws do, I may have to take a look in B&Q, dangerous, because my neighbour works there, news will filter back and DIY expectations in this household will be raised. The Plant markers can be adjusted in size of course, a moment's work with a craft knife, but those screw covers have lots of possibilities. Coastal Defence Fort Cupolas for instance, if there's a smaller one it could fit on top, like those piggy back US Cruiser turrets post 1900.

Hmm???

Rob Morgan.

HMS Argyll has dealt another blow to drug smugglers after seizing more than 850 kg of cocaine in a high speed midnight chase.



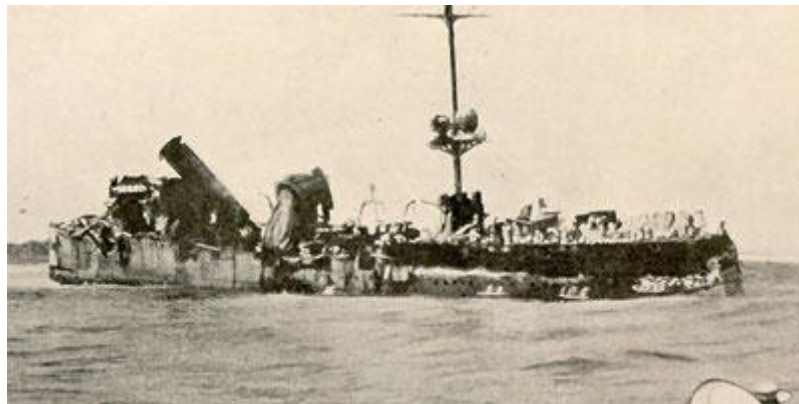
It is the third drugs bust for HMS Argyll in as many months. This latest haul has a wholesale value of £36 million – in total she has now seized 1,600kg of cocaine with a combined value of more than £68 million.

HMS Argyll apprehended the suspect vessel after being alerted by a US customs aircraft, which directed the ship to intercept. The Plymouth based frigate was pushed to maximum speed and quickly closed the 70 mile gap. After a high speed chase, during which time the

smugglers began to throw their illegal cargo overboard, the warship used high tech radar to guide her small patrol boats which surrounded the smugglers and forced them to surrender.



HMS Argyll seized 850 Kg of cocaine whilst on Counter Narcotics Operations in the Caribbean region. [Picture: LA (Phot) Stephen Johncock, Crown Copyright]



**Cruiser *Emden*, “White Swan of the East,”
after meeting the Australian cruiser *Sydney***

Thanks to Jeff Crane for bringing this web site to my attention. Cracking photographs of USS ARIZONA, being built, launched, showing original lattice masts, after being modernised and some shots that according to the note were only declassified in 1983.

<http://www.warbirdinformationexchange.org/phpBB3/viewtopic.php?f=3&t=54661>

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, 2014

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
