



All Guns Blazing!

Newsletter of the Naval Wargames Society

No. 243 – JANUARY 2015

EDITORIAL

A New Year, which unfortunately starts with bad news. Many of you will have known Geoff Crane, meeting him at Salute, Colours, Explosion or on-board HMS BELFAST and enjoyed his hospitality at Wargame days at Basingstoke. He has not enjoyed the best of health for a while but it was still a bit of a shock to learn of his death in December. So raise a glass, as somewhere in the World, the sun is over the yardarm.



HMS MOHAWK (one of Geoff Crane's Ships)



The following two stories are cut and paste from the HMS MOHAWK website:

We were in Bahrain in the spring of '65, I'd joined the ship a couple of months before and we were moored alongside the quay.

Turns out there was some trouble ashore with the locals, so we had to take turns at sentry duty on the quayside, 1 hour at a time, you know the routine, shorts, shirt, boots, blanched gaiters and belt...looked bloody ridiculous. A 303 and bayonet...no ammo of course and we were supposed to march up and down the length of the ship in the blistering heat.

Well, after about 10 minutes, checking by my watch, I realised it was taking about a minute to march up and down...so, clever me...50 more times up and down and I'd be finished. So I started counting the double beats. Unfortunately, due to my eagerness to get finished and into the shade with a nice cool drink, without realising it, I was moving faster and faster.... until I heard the snigger. Looking towards the ship I found half the ship's company watching me with great merriment and after "Bert" Lancaster called out "look at him zooming about", I was called Zoom for the next 2 years.

Geoff Crane

A NIGHT IN THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE

In the spring of 1967, I was serving aboard HMS Mohawk, a Tribal class frigate. We were in the West Indies, around 2 in the morning, and carrying out a RAS with HMS Lynx, to port of us, both making about 20 knots. I, with a few others, was on the quarterdeck, off watch....

.... as you know, during a RAS, a rating stands in the bows of one of the ships, operating the distance line, a heaving line which has coloured lights at 1 foot intervals, so that the bridge officers can more easily see the distance that the ships are apart. On this night, the distance man stood in the bows of Lynx and we were approx. 30 feet apart.

Suddenly, Lynx's port bridge searchlight came on and stabbed out into the darkness. About 2 minutes later, our port searchlight was switched on, also aiming out to port, across Lynx's bow, catching the transfixed distance man in its beam as he also could be seen looking to his left.

Everything then seemed to happen at once. As the engines were put to full ahead on Mohawk, the Buffer cut the hawser between the two ships. Then the sterns of our two ships began to come together, Lynx had gone to Full Astern and hard a-starboard (taking her to port) while we had also begun turning hard to starboard.

As the two ships began to move away from each other, we moved back to the port rail, in time to see a French frigate, the Henri, steam across Lynx's bows. We were told later, that Lynx had missed her by about 6 feet...it looked closer.

Geoff Crane.

The following is from Andy Field.

Good to see Minden Games getting some exposure. (Editor's Note: See December's AGB) Can I also recommend games by Paul Rohrbaugh's "High Flying Dice" (www.hfdgames.com)? Paul has designed several wargames for other companies as well as producing his own. If anyone wants to try some simple naval war-games, these include;

A Bold Fight. Farragut's victory at Mobile Bay.

Brave and Noble Fights. Sino-Japanese War battles of Wei-Hai-Wei and Yalu.

Death Before Dishonor and A Brilliant Combat. Both of these games set in the Spanish-American War use the same system as that in Brave and Noble Fights (Yalu game).

Mediterranean Fury: The Battle of Cape Matapan. Paul reckons that this is the only game on this battle, the largest fleet engagement between the Royal Navy and Italian Regia Marina.

Gauntlet: Operation Pedestal. This game was released earlier in 2014 and is getting excellent player feedback.

Day of Infamy: The Attack on Pearl Harbor.

Thunder Gods: Kamikaze attacks at Okinawa. Another very popular set of games (3) that can be played separately or combined.

St. George's Valor. Solitaire game on the attack on Zeebrugge. On-line reviews have likened it as a streamlined version of the old AH Raid on St. Nazaire.

Hampton Roads (Monitor v Merrimac) will be out sometime next year, probably around autumn time.

I recommend looking at the website. Prices vary but are all between \$15.00 - \$20.00 plus postage. All can be obtained with mounted counters for a few extra dollars and the additional Cardsets are also available for a bit extra.

On a separate matter I can also recommend two DVDs I recently got from Simply Home Entertainment. They are

Royal Navy in the Forties; The War Years over three hours of Movietone News clips on the RN in all theatres, with lots of different ships and aircraft featured. Lots of short newsreel clips and three short films, "MAC SHIP", "Who'll Buy a Warship" (a National savings film) and "The Volunteer", starring Sir Ralph Richardson.

Royal Navy in the Forties; The Post-War Years. Same format on the immediate post-war navy and FAA. Interesting to see post-war Home Fleet, battleships included, on exercises. Highlights include 1947 Royal Naval Review in the Clyde, Combined Exercises

in 1948 and joint exercises with the French and Dutch in 1949. Again some short films included "Pacific Hitch-hike", "Naval Air Reconnaissance", two films of submarines, one explaining naval salutes, and instructional films of the Squid and Safety Precautions in the Engine Room. There was a nice little extra on the Mediterranean Fleet in Greek waters in 1946. Only 4 minutes but it featured my dad's ship, the cruiser *Liverpool*. (He was there, but I didn't spot him on film!)

Finally..... The Naval Photograph Club is looking for new members. This is from their website at www.navalphotographclub.org.uk

"The Naval Photograph Club is an association of collectors of photographs of warships, both British and foreign, of all periods from the beginning of photography to the present.

The Club was founded in 1930. It was the brain-child of T.D.Manning, later Captain RNVR. Early members include Oscar Parkes, Pam Trotter, Richard Perkins and P.A.Vicary. During the Second World War the Club went into suspended animation, but was later revived after the end of the war with Philip Radcliffe as Secretary, Oscar Parkes as President and Manning as Vice-President.

Sets of Xeroxed photos are sent to members around the world. Usually six rounds a year are circulated, each containing 20 pictures. Subjects vary from ships of the pre-dreadnought era to the most modern vessels.

To avoid the system becoming overloaded the total membership is limited to about 100 members at any one time. **At present there are some vacancies.**

Sources from which photographs are drawn are many and varied. Older members' own collections are tapped for interesting pictures, thus spreading these to a wider circulation and also preventing such images being lost. We are always interested in new sources of photographs and in conservation.

Would you like to become a member? We are particularly interested in encouraging younger members. Currently the annual subscription is £15.00 and 'postcard' size photographs are available at just 40p each.

Further information can be obtained from:

Peter Froud, 27 Camden Way, DORCHESTER, Dorset, DT1 2RA
e-mail - pfroud@btinternet.com

Well worth considering I reckon.

Chinese Naval Ships visit Portsmouth

Three Chinese Naval ships will arrive in Portsmouth for a formal visit aimed at enhancing military understanding between the UK and China.



Chinese Ambassador Liu Xiaoming will welcome the ships into the city's Naval Base on Monday (January 12).

Crew members from all three vessels will be given tours of local attractions including The Victory, HMS Warrior and the Mary Rose and they'll also be shown around the Royal Navy's newest warship - Type 45 destroyer HMS Duncan.

The ships leave Portsmouth on January 16.



HORSEBANK FORT

Known collectively as "Palmerston's Follies", after Lord Palmerston, British Prime Minister at the time, the Sea Forts, built to deter the French from attacking the British Fleet at anchor in Portsmouth, never fired a shot in anger. 25 feet thick walls of alternating 5 feet of concrete and 5 feet of steel prove that those Victorians built to last. Too expensive and difficult to demolish, two of the three Forts have been home to seagulls only for far too long. Spitbank Fort was refurbished a while ago and after several years of being open for day visits and as a disco venue is now the private home of somebody with more money than me with exclusive hotel accommodation available, again for someone with more money than me. Horsebank Fort and No Mans' Land Fort have attracted plans for

refurbishment and transformation into museums/attractions. I hope it happens but I will not hold my breath waiting.

After a short break, the Quiz returns, curtesy of Rob Morgan. So exercise those little grey cells.

-SEA QUIZ 38.

‘The Navy’ often had a surprise or two in its quiz questions, who for example could have anticipated number 6? The following month one correspondent complained that it wasn’t a naval question at all, but then he probably didn’t know the answer any more than I did!!!

1. Give the names of 10 Royal Navy Warships beginning with MA...
2. Which British Admiral fled to France to avoid his creditors/
3. Nine RN Battleships had their main armament concentrated forward, Nelson and Rodney were two of course, name the others...
4. Which old former battleship posed as HMS Anson on convoy duties during WWII?
5. Where did this impostor end up?
6. Where in Germany is there a memorial to Sir Francis Drake?

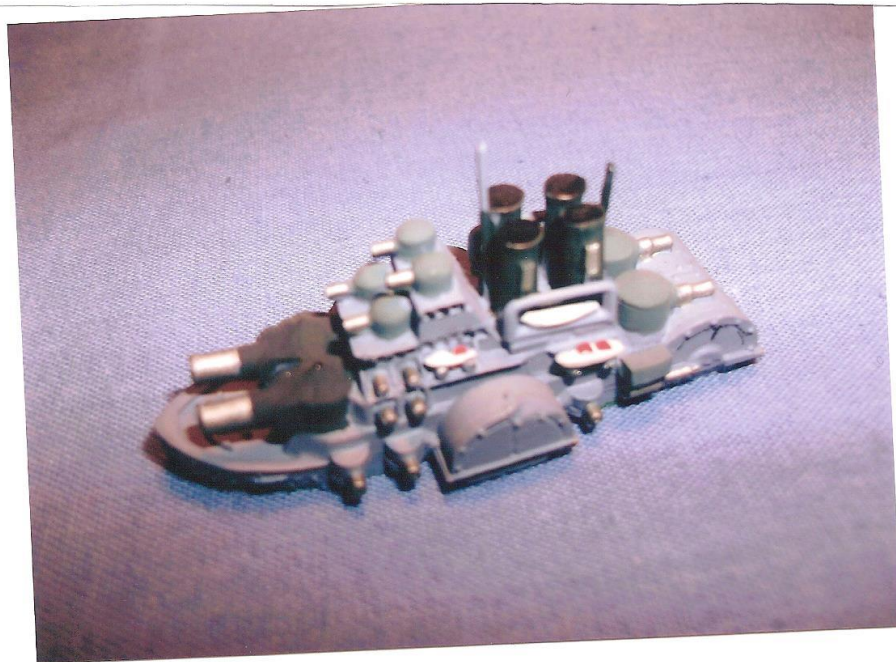
Good Luck
R.M.

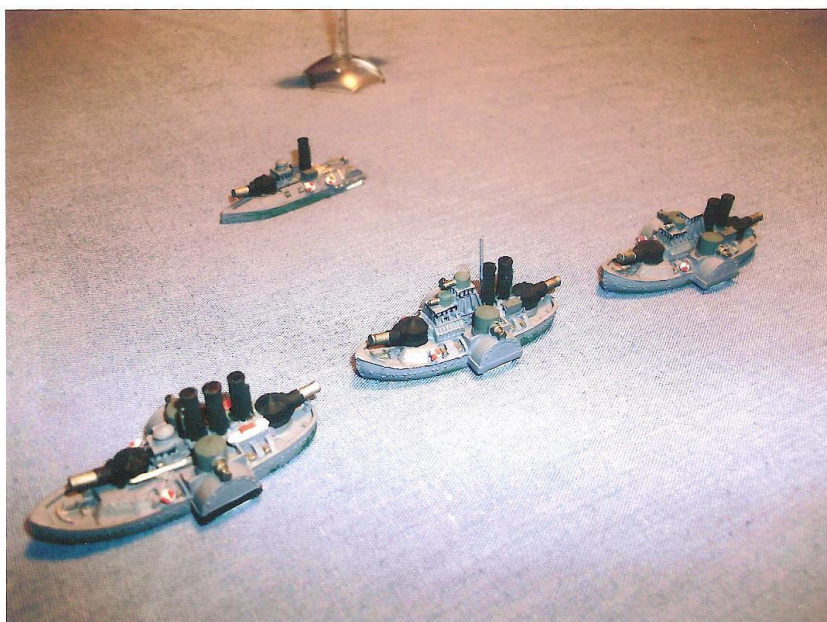
An Ironclad Fleet from Games Workshop.

From time to time the struggling GW produces a small usually short-lived range of ships or vessels which can be used by the inventive wargamer. These are an example, they were described as 'Dwarf Iron Ships' or something similar, I can't remember now, but then it was several years back.

They attracted me though. I think there were four or five types, of which all but one had potential for creating a Science Fiction coastal defence fleet. Coastal as they are after all, paddlers, with either side or stern wheels, or both! The largest in the first photo is intended to be a Battleship, obviously, and just under 50mm long overall, with a couple of interesting features, four funnels grouped like the odd Russian '*Navarin*' and twin turrets forward for main armament like the Prussian '*Odin's*'. This large warship is as supplied with the addition of 1/1200th (the approximate scale I'd say) ship's boats, there were none on the all metal model, and a couple of pole masts too. Yes, the guns are huge, but weren't we talking about 100 ton guns on Italian Ironclads recently?

The four smaller 'Cruisers' (sic) and 'Destroyer' (I think that was what it was called) are similar in design, and a rather attractive design too, and only required a couple of ship's boats, simple life rafts and masts. The largest of these is about 50mm long, and the smallest about 35mm. Choice of colour scheme was simple enough, I happened to have a decent light blue-grey shade, Humbrol I think, and funnels and bigger turrets were black, with gunmetal





touches, though white-buff-black crossed my mind at one stage, as did Austrian green, as this is a coastal force.

That's it for the ex-dwarf 'line of battle' such as it is, and the more observant will notice the base at the top of the second photo, that's the airship which the flotilla uses, more of that later perhaps. I found a couple of small 1/1200th scale ACW oddities which fitted in neatly as in one case a small patrol boat, that was a 1/1200th 'Little Rebel' armed with one of the smallest turrets you can see 2mm across, and a rather battered CSS Baltic in the same scale, and that became a transport/ hospital ship/ auxiliary with some protection in the form of armour.

Having noticed the airship base you'll also notice the lack of flags, well this isn't because as in the case of my ACW warships, I can't find the box they're in, no, it's because I've not been able to choose between several around; the 'Tumbling Dice' Barbary Corsairs have some nice options, but the alternative of a simple white or black field with a cross of some form also appeals. I have used them with some 'Tudor' ensigns slipped over the pin masts, flags which are attractive, unusual, and in a few cases unrecognisable for what they are intended to be.

Different, and hefty warships, and ideal for facing almost any c1880's force you fancy. Any add-on rules (I suppose that GW did have rules for them originally?) would have to deal with the rate of fire of the very big guns, and vulnerability of the paddle boxes.

Rob Morgan.

SIGNAL PAD!

How could Microsoft get Windows 8 so wrong? Why is copying and pasting email attachments so different and more complicated? Why are the scanner screens so different and not user friendly? Why is the machine trying to “upgrade” to Windows 8.1 with no “No” option, just do it now or 4 hours time? Why? WHY? WHY?

I feel a bit better now I’ve got that off my chest. It’s a while since I’ve had a rant from the crows’ nest. Where are my pills?

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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-

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
