



All Guns Blazing!

Newsletter of the Naval Wargames Society

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EDITORIAL



Tin pieces from a Battle of Coronel and Falkland Islands Game dating from 1915. The Game was included for free in “Chums” a newspaper for boys. (And a Schneider Trophy winning seaplane for some reason. Designed by Mitchell, who went on to design the Spitfire of course).

The Imperial War Museum has a set of the pieces and many other artefacts relating to the battles. They also have photographs taken by officers during the sea fight and oral histories from men who were there.

My memory of late 1982, early 1983 is that a Falkland Island War Game was in the shops; I saw it but dithered on buying it, as it came with a paper map. I'm from the generation that believes “board games” should have a board. There was controversy at the time, as the Game, so soon after the Falklands War was thought to be, “in bad taste”. It was withdrawn for sale (in the UK at least) and I forgot all about it. 30 plus years later and with the help of the internet, I came upon it by chance. He who hesitates is lost, so I took the plunge and bought a copy. An introductory level game from Mayfair Games which covers the events of the Great War plus those of 1982. It's good fun and should you come across it, I suggest you buy it. By the way; “Chums” 500 plus pages for 1d. (For you youngsters that's one old penny and there were 240 pennies in a Pound)

The following is an excerpt from Mensun Bound's notes in the "Penguin News"; the Falkland Islands' weekly newspaper.

HMS Glasgow, the only ship to be present at both Coronel and Falkland Battles, preparing for war:

The Glasgow had just completed her second consecutive commission in the South Atlantic and was in Rio preparing to return to England when she was notified of the deteriorating situation between Britain and Germany and that she must make preparations for war. Immediately she began stripping away the woodwork and disembarking all flammables and superfluous equipment. Comforts, such as the mess room armchairs and even the library, were sent ashore followed by the men's civilian clothing and unnecessary personal effects. They did, however, keep the piano which was later given to Stanley (capital of the Falkland Island, not an individual) and survived for many years in the gymnasium where the bank is now situated.

On this day Glasgow received a message from the Admiralty to say that Germany is at war with France and that Britain is likely to become involved. Because the ship had been on the point of returning to England, many of the crew had bought Amazonian parrots to take home as pets. After much discussion it was decided that the birds could stay and even, if necessary, go into battle.

In a clear hand an officer on the bridge wrote in the log: 'Hands preparing for war'. There was a keen feeling of excitement throughout the ship, but nobody had any idea that they were on the brink of what Lloyd Hirst, the vessel's intelligence officer, described as 'the greatest and most terrible war that history has yet recorded'.

Sea Quiz 44 Answers.

The compiler of the quizzes, whoever he or she was, produced some incredible arguments, and there were stern letters on the subject of the 'misleading' question 1 in this set.

1. It was the 'Duncan' Class....*but* only the first three of them!
2. This was *HMS Colossus*.
3. Not a Royal Navy ship at all, but the French '*Paris*' (1912).
4. An easy one this, the RAN Battlecruiser *Australia*, off Sydney.
5. The Coast Defence Ram *HMS Bellisle*. An answer which induced several questions as to why? Not satisfactorily answered either.

Rob Morgan.

SEA QUIZ 45.

Last months were perhaps a little out of the ordinary, so good luck with this month's five questions. By the way the debate over Question 5 was long and involved officers and men who had served on the respective claimants to the 'first'.

1. Which British warship had a black cross inlaid into her quarterdeck?
2. What was the largest recorded convoy in WWII?
3. The last wooden flagship on the RN effective list?
4. The first British Ironclad capital ship to be sunk by collision?
5. The first British capital ship to mount an a/a gun?

Best of luck.
Rob Morgan

Try these websites.

<http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/shipwrecks/independence>

www.history.navy.mil/research/library/online-reading-room/title-list-alphabetically/j/japanese-story-of-the-battle-of-midway.html

www.wargaming.co



If you live in a “Navy” town then you will find the “Navy News” on your newsagent’s shelf. If not then you will have to subscribe to receive a copy. It covers current events of the Royal Navy, as well as interesting articles on stories with a navy connexion. For example:



The first naval aviator to receive Britain’s highest decoration has been honoured with three separate services marking his bravery 100 years ago. Wreath laying at Brompton Cemetery and memorial stones unveiled at Exmouth, Devon and Highworth, Wiltshire.

Flight Sub Lieutenant Reginald ‘Rex’ Warneford became an instant hero across the Allied nations in June 1915 as the first man to down a German airship – the feared Zeppelins – in aerial combat. Within a day of his exploits high above Evere, near Brussels in Belgium, he was awarded the Victoria Cross by King George V – the first of only four fliers in the history of Royal Navy aviation to do so.

But just ten days after his stirring exploits, and while still being feted by the international media, the 23-year-old pilot was killed performing a test flight of a new aircraft outside Paris. He was buried with full honours in Brompton Cemetery in West London, an occasion attended by 55,000 people. ‘Reckless’ Rex Warneford as comrades dubbed him destroyed Zeppelin LZ37 as it returned to its base in Belgium, dropping four 20lb bombs on to the leviathan.

The blast not only brought down the German airship, but threw Warneford’s Morane-Saulnier monoplane upside down and damaged it. He was forced to make an emergency landing behind enemy lines, fix a fuel leak with his cigarette holder, then return to base in time for breakfast.

<https://navynews.co.uk/archive/news/item/12835>

The F35 Lightning II is being put through its paces at the Pax River US Navy Airbase, where BAe Test Pilot Peter Wilson has launched from a ski jump built to replicate the QE Class of Aircraft Carrier. The ramp rises 6 metres (20 feet) from the horizontal. Meanwhile, RAF Test Pilot Sqn Ldr Andy Edgell is evaluating the F35/Paveway IV combo. Dummy Paveways have been dropped in the vast Atlantic Test Ranges on the US Eastern Seaboard.

ACW Balsa Models in 1/1200th.

A slightly nostalgic thought.....

If you open your copy of Don Featherstone's *'Naval Wargames'* and look at photograph 15 in the centre, you'll see a group of very basic balsa ACW ironclads and tinclads, roughly 1/1200th scale, and frankly, unless you had access to the awesomely lovely (but somehow fantastic) metal models of Jack Scruby, all that was around. Home-made from simple materials and painstakingly so, believe me! I used to have lots of them, trimmed with razor blades and assembled with Woolworth's all- purpose glue. The flags were a nightmare until I realised that the bulk of the Confederate naval ensign was white at one stage!

As is well known, and not infrequently criticised, I am a believer that you can wargame with almost anything, and that constructing models in the good old fashioned Don Featherstone, and Paul Hague and Phil Dunn method has its place in an occupation where these days a single warship can set you back twenty five pounds (and still sink in two moves).

These are not my modelling work, unfortunately. They are however balsa and thin wooden dowel with a pin jackstaff and paper flags, and are 1/1200th scale- or as near as makes no difference. I've just finished a game using the models, and Don's incredibly fast and simple 1965 rules (pages 108-109). Take a look at the models of USS Cairo and a Confederate Ram, not unlike CSS Tennessee.

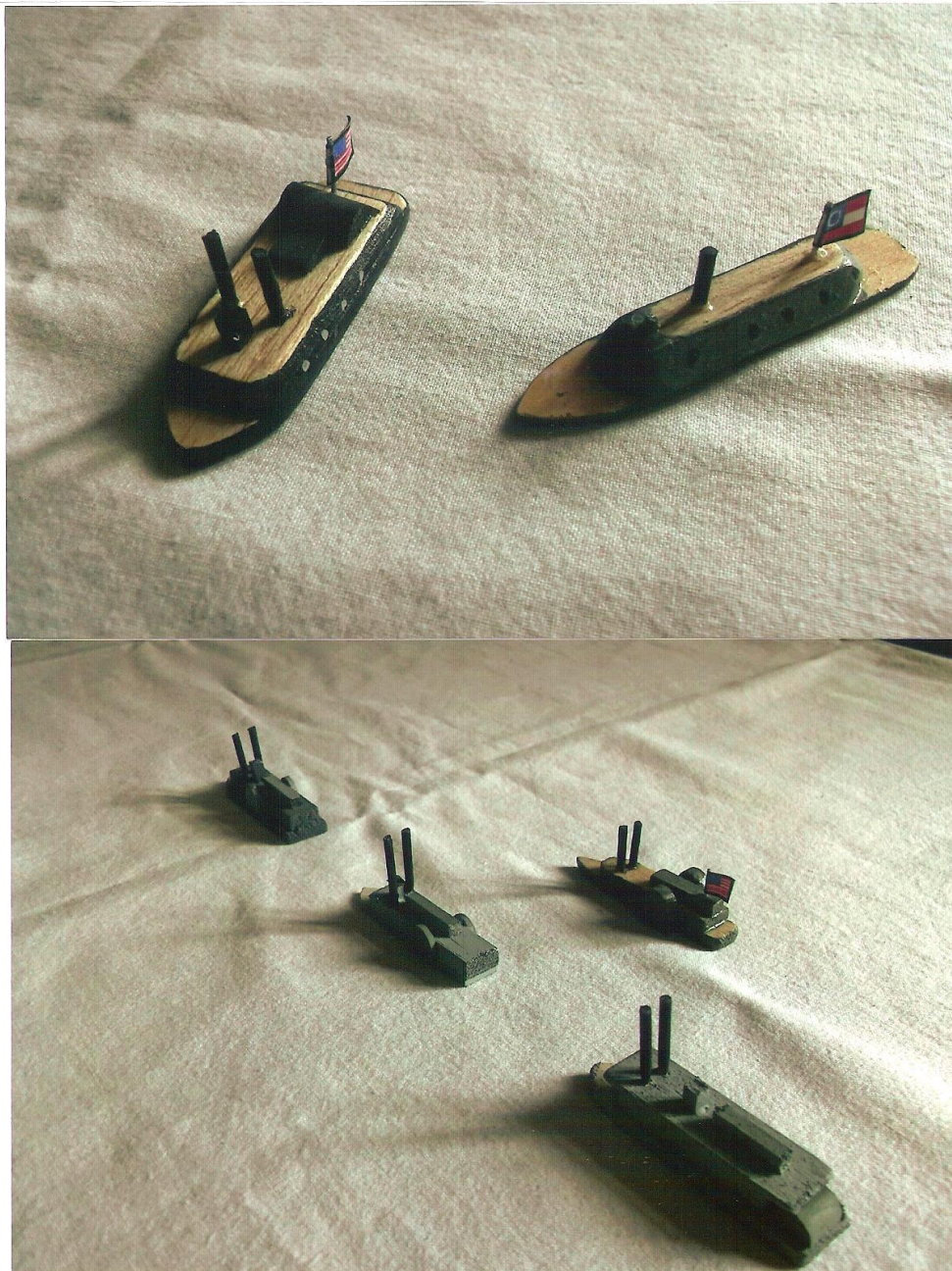
They are 100% balsa hulls, painted and varnished, as are the three transports escorted by a Yankee Tinclad in the second photograph- the intended victims of the Confederate. The fast rules, and skilful use of the ram enabled the Rebel to shrug off the hefty Federal, forcing her aground. Sadly the Southerners could only catch up with one doomed transport the others escaped as fast as they could down river.

The models were made by my friend and Solo Wargamers Association colleague Mike Crane of Arkansas, best known for his exquisite paper sailing ship fleets, which most NWS members will be familiar with. Just to handle and move these light models around the table top is a pleasure, they are far from basic, and most attractive. It reminded me of how simple and enjoyable it once

was to play a naval wargame, and of the pleasure that used to come from making your own galleys or ironclads.

If I remember rightly, in Phil Dunn's "*Sea Battle Games*" published in 1970, used balsa wood and domestic floor tiles (!) to make a couple of US Pre-Dreadnoughts, which looked good to my enthusiastic eye. While Paul Hague made a splendid Italian Dandolo out of a similar mix of raw materials, but I suppose balsa wood's just as expensive as some manufacturers ship models nowadays, if you can find it.

Rob Morgan.



Some 1/3000th Scale Auxiliaries.

The 'supporting vessels' in the Mick Yarrow 1/3000th range are useful and inexpensive for twentieth century naval wargamers. The growing US 'Fleet Train's a good example, well received in US reviews, but this month sees a couple of rather unusual British auxiliary warships from WWI. All these models are sold at 80p as I write.

3355 HMS Hector Kite Balloon Ship 1915.

3356 HMS Manica.Kite Balloon Ship 1915.. later carried a seaplane (moulded on hull).

3357 HMS Canning. Kite Ballon Ship-convoy escort 1914.

Both Hector and Manica served at Gallipoli, and Hector's balloon is shown inflating on deck as part of the hull moulding. Manica's is separate, and can be wire mounted over the hull. Canning has a much larger balloon, separate, but also seems 'inflating'. Nice models, very little flash, could serve into early WWII as ballooned merchantmen possibly?

3358 HMS Royal Ulsterman. Landing Ship..sunk 1943.



3359 HMS Bulolo. Landing ship HQ.

Simple models, attractive and useful, might do with some extra detail though. Good additions to an invasion (or evacuation in the case of 3358!) convoy.

3104. Avila Star.....Liner. See the photograph.

An unfortunate group of ships, all sunk in WWII if I'm right. This is a big model for the price and scale, some 55mm overall and sturdy and attractive. It will fit in with 1/2400th models easily.... And I'm currently working on removing the funnels, replacing them with a single 10mm length of biro tube, adding a mast and filing flat the ship's boats.... With a couple of 1/1200th light guns on bandstands fore and aft this model will make a very decent 1/1200th WWII armed island ferry, and fit in with some of my old Bill Gilpin 'Clydeside' light stuff. A fictional model in 1/3000th would take a catapult over the bows perhaps? Or even a balloon astern?

Nice models and worth looking at.

Rob Morgan.



Rhodian Fire-ships. 190BC.

A Modelling and Wargame Note by Rob Morgan.

Unfortunately, our University copy of Dr. Lionel Casson's excellent volume '*Ships & Seamanship in the Ancient World*' which was originally published in 1971, reprinted in 1986, seems little consulted these days, but it's invaluable to wargamers. Sufficient to say that it deals comprehensively with warships, merchantmen, fleets and equipment from the Predynastic Age of Egypt to the fall of Rome. In 400 pages Casson covers everything you need to know as a Classical naval type, armament, rigs and the speed of warships. Even the use of slaves and the markings and names of individual ships. Which reminds me when I get around to building an Egyptian New Kingdom fleet, I must call one of them '*Overthrower of the Evil Ones*' –nice ring to it!

One of the 197 illustrations is this. It's a 1st Century BC warship equipped with a fire-pot. Casson says that in 190BC, the Rhodian Admiral Pausistratus introduced fire-pots, containers of blazing incendiary material slung from the tips of long poles projecting over the bows. If an enemy warship neared for an attack, the pots were dropped on his deck starting fires, if the enemy turned away, then he was open to ramming. This simple device was introduced in an emergency, but worked effectively. The 'pot' was funnel-shaped, iron according to Livy, and along the inner side of the gunwale either side of the bow were rigged two looped lines attached to long poles sticking out over the water, the poles could be fixed or moved to each beam (rather like some of the ACW torpedo devices fitted to Confederate ironclads, I presume?). To the tip of each pole the fire-pot could be attached by a piece of iron chain, so that when attacking an enemy frontally or broadside, the fire could be dumped on his deck by releasing the looped line. The poles were, presumably because of the weight of the pot and incendiary not horizontal but bent towards the water, making the device more effective.

So valuable did they prove that according to Appian, Casson says they were used 'later in the same year as regular fleet equipment.' Nothing new in using fire at sea of course, Thucydides describes fire-ships at the Siege of Syracuse, but the idea took my fancy. Now as I recently acquired a job lot of Xyston 1/600th Ancient Galleys, crews, ballistae, etc at a knock down price, I thought I'd have a go at a Rhodian fire-ship or two.

The best known carving on Rhodes is the Lindos Trihemiola c.190-180BC, and so I took a couple of the 'Hellenistic Trihemiola' models, 18112 in the range and added two 22mm lengths of dressmaker's pin (with the head remaining on) either side of the bow, pointing forwards, and bent downwards a little before cementing in place.

They look fine and proved a deterrent. Of course any bright enemy Commander might look for a means of deflecting the beams or cutting the lines, even of catching the pots as they fell.

Incidentally, in case of a problem in relation to an allied ship or an accident, the pots could presumably be jettisoned harmlessly into the Aegean. I can't find the comment in either Livy or Appian, but presumably these were 'one-off' weapons, prepared as action commenced, rather than re-loadable, or re-fillable.

The trained Hellenic observers among you will notice that there appears to be a small 'tower' or structure on the bow of this vessel in the illustration. Of course a temporary erection would be easy enough, with just a couple of men under the *Proreta* – bow officer to handle the lines and move the poles from bow to sides. The Romans used collapsible towers of course, and a 3mm high 'slice' of one of the Xyston towers, there are some in the pack of ballistae, will do. I suspect the first of Pausistratus' fire-ships won't have had the refinement at all, just a simple screen possibly to deflect any heat.

I do recommend Casson's book, it's far, far more interesting and instructive to the wargamer than Conway's 'History of the Galley', which certainly owes it a debt.

Rob Morgan.

Her Majesty The Queen and members of The Royal Family will attend a series of events on Saturday 15 August to commemorate the 70th anniversary of Victory over Japan Day (VJ Day).

In the morning, The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh will attend a service to mark the 70th anniversary, together with veterans, former prisoners of war and civilian internees at St Martin-in-the-Fields Church, Trafalgar Square, organised by National FEPOW (Far East Prisoners of War) Fellowship Welfare Remembrance Association. Among the congregation will be representatives of all Regiments that made up the 18th Infantry Division of 1942 who were deployed to the Far East and representatives from Commonwealth nations who also served.



Revellers celebrate VJ Day in 1945 [IWM]

The day will be marked at Horse Guards Parade, beginning in spectacular style with a flypast of four historic aircraft, a Spitfire, Dakota and Hurricane of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight and a Royal Navy Swordfish, together with a current RAF Typhoon. The event will also include a drumhead service and wreath-laying ceremony, special readings, and hymns sung by the Gwalia Male Voice Choir and the London Welsh Male Voice Choir.

Actor Charles Dance will be reading the poem 'The Road to Mandalay' by Rudyard Kipling. The poem was famously set to music and was a favourite marching tune for many in the 14th Army in Burma, commanded by Field Marshal Lord Slim.

Veterans, civilian internees, their descendants and families along with current personnel will be led by pipes and drums down Whitehall and through Parliament Square to Westminster Abbey – passing the statue of Field Marshal Slim – in a special 70th anniversary parade. Along the route they will be supported by military bands, and the final part of the route will be lined by current military personnel in tribute. A reception will then take place in the grounds of Westminster Abbey, hosted by The Royal British Legion.



VJ Day celebrations in London 1945
[IWM]

Victor Knibb, 90, of Hampton in Surrey, is the Vice-Chairman of the Burma Star Association and served with the 4th Battalion The Royal West Kent Regiment said:

“VJ Day means a lot to me. Around 97,000 British and Commonwealth troops died out there and more than 120,000 Japanese died in that war. To me, VJ Day is for the memory of those men who didn’t come back. Without them we wouldn’t have had 70 years of peace and comfort.”

The public can support this anniversary by lining the street of Whitehall to view the national service on big screens, watch the aircraft flypast, and cheer on the veterans as they parade supported by military bands and current serving personnel. Events are also being held across the country to mark the anniversary of the victory over Japan and the end of the Second World War.

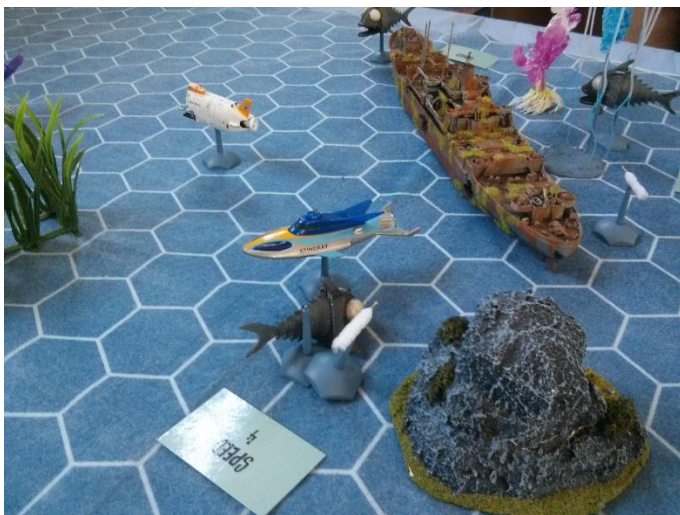
The Royal British Legion tel: 0203 053 7015 or email at VJDAY70@britishlegion.org.uk
For further information, visit the VJ Day website.

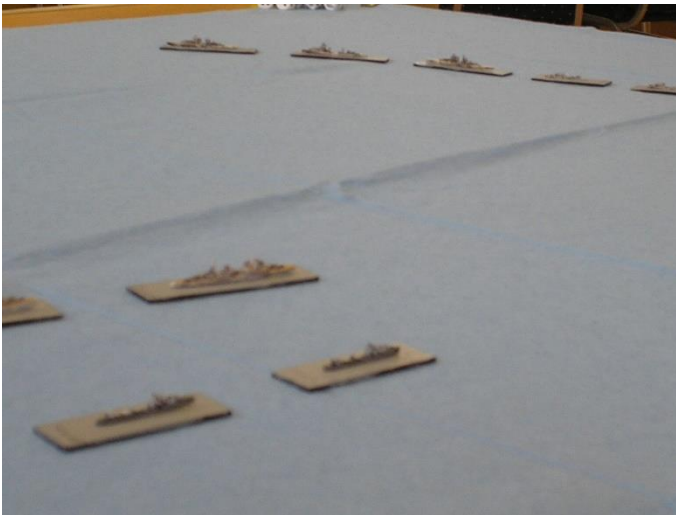
<https://www.gov.uk/vjday70>

On Wednesday 29th July, the Royal Navy, “Spliced The Main Brace”, to celebrate the recent birth of Princess Charlotte. Traditions – they’re important.

SIGNAL PAD!

A good time was had at the Naval Wargames weekend at The Explosion Museum, Gosport. Roman galleys, Napoleonics, First Battle of Port Arthur, Matapan and a lot of fun with Stingray verses the Aquaphibian Terror Fish. Models on show included Tumblin’ Dice and Navwar. Rule sets in use, Fleet Action Imminent and GQ II and III. Well done to Dave Manley and all who helped and contributed to the weekend. Thanks to Simon for the Stingray photographs.





JOINING THE NAVAL WARGAMES SOCIETY

If you have been lent this newsletter and would like to join the Naval Wargames Society, please follow this link to join our Society:

www.navalwargamesociety.org.

Membership secretary: simonjohnstokes@aol.com

NWS Events and Regional Contacts, 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

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