



All Guns Blazing!

Newsletter of the Naval Wargames Society

No. 262 – AUGUST 2016

EDITORIAL

The Naval Wargames Weekend at Explosion, Museum of Naval Firepower went well. Napoleonic's, Russian Revolution Riverine, hunt that Spanish Treasure Galleon, Great War Battlewagons and from the left field, powerboat racing. The weather was changeable and we wondered if the Battle of the River Plate outside would be possible. Unfortunately it was not possible as the grass was too wet from the earlier rain. After several years taking the lead in arranging the Naval Games Weekend at the Museum, David Manley wants to have a break and therefore we are looking for someone else to take a turn. If you want to have a go, please contact either David or me.

Welcome to Rory McCreadie, Peter Lowe and Gary Mitchell who joined NWS at the Games weekend. Also welcome to Brent Oman and Jonathan Roche who joined soon after.

I can assure you that I am not old enough to remember when the exchange rate was \$4 to the £ but I do remember an exchange rate of \$2.40 to £1. The current exchange rate and the cost of postage means that there will be a drop in UK NWS Members buying items from the USA. However this does mean it could be a good time for USA Members to find a bargain on this side of the Pond.

Somewhere in the World the sun is over the yardarm.

Norman Bell

The following is from new Member Gary Mitchell

The PDF 'Fighting Ships' rules (my all eras adaptation of 'Fighting Sail') that we've been taking around shows can be downloaded at <http://garymitchell.co.uk/whats-the-buzz-with-gary/>, free to play, and I would welcome all input from playtesting.

SEA QUIZ 54....answer time.

Another group with a contested answer, no not by you lot, but by the readership of *'The Navy'* at the time.

1. A 'Winkle Barge' was any type of Landing Craft (Flak). Simple eh?
2. Apparently, this was a nickname given to the 3rd Battle Squadron, and relates to Beatty's first name David (another Biblical hint). Seems a bit far-fetched to me.

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3. At Gronigen in Holland where a number of RN personnel were interned after Antwerp was lost.
 4. Easy one...they are, or were, all 'Stone Frigates'. Shore establishments with ship's names.
 5. Well, two answers to this one it seems, and one of them pretty obscure.

It was the nickname for *HMS Warspite* in WWI (anyone know why? The compiler didn't go further and explain).

Or, allegedly, it was the name given to the Tuck Shop at Dartmouth....didn't they, one wonders, have a NAAFI???

SEA QUIZ 55.

A couple of nick-names this time around....off we go.....!

1. What ship was named *'The Silver Phantom'* by the Italians in WWII?
2. What is 'the silver streak'?
3. Who or what was 'Sims Circus'?
4. 'Peggy's Guns'. Where did they serve ashore?
5. What was known as 'Old One-Eye'?

Wargames Weekend at Explosion Museum.







Wowed by a dazzling line up at Royal Naval Air Station Yeovilton International Air Day, crowds witnessed a glittering array of aircraft representing the past, present and future of flight.

Cloudy skies and the occasional shower could not dampen the delights at the Royal Navy's largest Air Day as thousands enjoyed a festival of aviation. Spectators were thrilled as aircraft from across the world to the sky with breath-taking and exhilarating flying displays. With a crowd of over 35,000 through the gates RNAS Yeovilton's Air Day started as it meant to go on as two Wildcats and two Lynx (at their final ever Air Day) led with a 'Diamond 4' formation.



A Fairey Swordfish



The RAF Red Arrows Display Team perform a perfect heart shape in the sky.

And an old favourite brought cheers and loud applause from the crowds as the Fly Navy Heritage trust's Sea Vixen took to the Somerset skies. This iconic all British twin-boom, twin-turbo-jet powered fighter, that flew from the Royal

Navy's carriers in the 1960s and early 1970s thundered over the spectators, in true Naval style.



HH-60H Seahawk helicopter from the USS Nimitz lands on HMS Dragon
[Picture: Leading Airman (Photographer) Dave Jenkins, Crown copyright]



HMS DRAGON has completed a multi-million £ refit and has been accepted back into the fleet. The refit, which started in July last year at Her Majesty's Naval Base Portsmouth, is Dragon's first major maintenance period since she was launched in 2008.

Work has included substantial maintenance to the state of the art electric propulsion system as well as upgrades to weapons, sensors and communications equipment.

MARY ROSE RE-OPENS TO THE PUBLIC.

The Tudor warship has undergone 34 years of conservation since it was raised from the Solent in 1982. The Ship is housed in a purpose built Museum in the Heritage Area of Her Majesty's Naval Base Portsmouth. Small viewing panels have been replaced with floor-to-ceiling windows and a viewing balcony is entered through an airlock. You can walk through the ship, the starboard side reflected to create the port side.

The Mary Rose Trust said it was a "stunning new experience".

The warship, which sank in 1545 while leading an attack on a French invasion fleet, was discovered in 1971. It was taken to an atmospherically-controlled dry dock where it was sprayed with a mist of cold water, then water-soluble wax, before an air-drying process began.

The latest development, the Museum built around the Ship, which saw the ship close to public view in November 2015, cost about £5.4 million to complete.

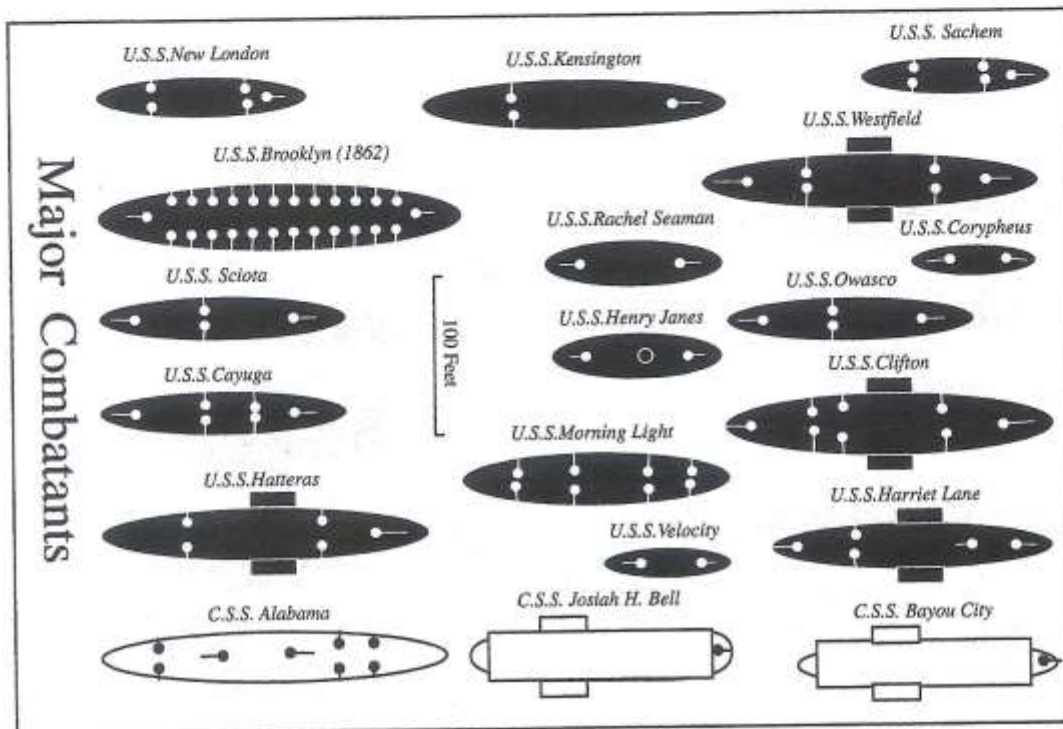
Mary Rose - Timeline

- 1510 - The ship is ordered by the newly crowned King Henry VIII and construction begins in Portsmouth. It is launched in 1511.
- 1545 - On 19 July, at the Battle of the Solent, the ship sinks while leading the attack on the French invasion fleet.
- 1549 - After expert Venetian salvors make unsuccessful attempts to raise the wreck, the ship lies undisturbed for almost 300 years.
- 1836 - Early pioneering divers, John and Charles Deane, discover the wreck site and raise guns using explosives. They later lose its location.
- 1965 - A new search for the wreck begins.
- 1971 - Divers see the first exposed timbers and the site is identified as the Mary Rose.
- 1979 - 1982 - The ship's contents are excavated by divers and more than 19,000 artefacts are brought to the surface.
- 1982 - The wreck of the hull is raised. The event is watched live on television by an estimated 60 million people worldwide.
- 2013 - A £35m Mary Rose Museum opens in Portsmouth.

COTTONCLADS!

My colleague and friend Mike Crane of Texarcana recently sent me a copy of *Cotonclads! The Battle of Galveston and the Defense of the Texas Coast*, by Donald S. Frazier, published in 1998 by McWhiney Foundation Press in the USA, at \$11.95. A 144 page paperback well mapped and illustrated, and dealing with a combined ops campaign which has much to offer the ACW naval wargamer...the vessels involved are easily assembled using 'Peter Pig', 'Thoroughbred' and 'Bay Area Yards' models in 1/600th, or the products of the usual suspects in 1/1200th. I prefer 1/600th because the 'Pig' range has a decent shore force for sharpshooting and ambush purposes, all very useful if you game these battles.

In 1862, Farragut initiated landings against Galveston and other Texan ports, and Galveston was captured. However, the sailors of the Union fleet suffered setbacks and ultimately defeat when a Confederate force of 'Cottonclads' were bold enough to attack the Yankee warships, and were ably supported by Texan artillery and sharpshooters ashore. The counterattack led to heavy losses by the Federals, and the re-taking of Galveston, which remained a crucial Confederate blockade runner port until the war's end.



A very readable and useful book, it deals with several of the encounters which might make sound table top games. The Battle of Sabine Pass, and the action off Galveston on New Year's Day 1863 for example. While there's a very good diagram of a subsidiary encounter between two Union gunboats and Texan shore gunners and infantry at Kuhn's Wharf...that would make an interesting game, using land and naval forces. The sinking of *USS Hatteras*, the capture of *USS Harriet Lane* and the capture of three Union supply vessels in a lengthy chase make for short and effective games.

As well as illustrating how dangerous a place Texas could be for the Federal ships, the book includes a very interesting and most unusual feature- one made for the naval wargamer. On page 44, there's a plan of each of the major naval vessels involved in these encounters, some twenty in all, and to scale. The gun positions are shown clearly, and the armament and ship details are shown for each one in Appendix C of the book. By copying the page onto card, the non-ACW naval person can create the battles with little effort, and they can be used elsewhere on the rivers and coasts of the Confederacy, of course. Even beyond that!

A few pages on, there are two side on views of Confederate 'Cottonclads' which could also be turned into 'flats' for a table top action.

An excellent book, filled with ideas and interest, dealing with a campaign the Confederacy won and won through competent action afloat and ashore.

Ten out of Ten

Rob Morgan.

I think I paid a shilling for it?

This ancient model of HMS Ajax emerged from my collection the other afternoon, quite by chance, I haven't looked at or used it in a game for years. It is, as the grey-bearded among us will all immediately recognise, a 1/1200th Eaglewall kit of that splendid light cruiser. My only surviving Eaglewall model as a matter of fact, and my oldest surviving wargame model! I know where I bought it and when, in 1963 at a long defunct model emporium under the Plaza cinema, it came in a small red box, and it really was a shilling or one and six at most. My modelling skills can't have been that bad either, since the hull's not hidden under blobs of cement, and the turret guns are all in place.

The colour scheme, probably totally inaccurate, dates from much later, and I have a suspicion that at some stage I actually added the seaplane aft of the funnel, I think from an Airfix 1/1200th cruiser. I wonder what happened to the other Eaglewall stuff I had, the *Saar* and *Acheron*, two tiny favourites, and the rack of U-Boats? Looking at it after fifty years, those old Eaglewall models were not at all bad were they? If only I'd had enough pocket money to have bought the whole range.

Rob Morgan.





FIRST VISIT TO PLYMOUTH FOR US NAVY SUBMARINE

A misty arrival welcomed the United States Navy submarine USS Virginia on her first visit to HM Naval Base Devonport. The submarine is the lead boat of her class of the technologically-advanced attack submarines. She has a crew of 13 officers and 121 enlisted personnel. Launched in August 2003 and commissioned the following year, she was the first submarine to be entirely designed on a computer. USS Virginia forms the next-generation attack submarine in the US Navy. Twelve VIRGINIA's have been commissioned to date and they will replace Los Angeles Class submarines as they retire. USS Virginia is conducting a routine deployment in the US 6th Fleet area of operations.

World's greatest test pilot remembered with commemorative tribute

[25/07/2016](#)

Captain Eric 'Winkle' Brown CBE DSC AFC FRAeS Royal Navy, who died earlier this year, has been remembered with a commemorative tribute and flypast at Royal Naval Air Station Yeovilton.

Eric was the most celebrated test pilot and naval aviator of his generation and flew an incredible 487 different aircraft types, both fixed and rotary wing. He also carried out an unbeatable 4,678 take offs and landing from aircraft carriers, which to this day stands as a world record. He will be remembered forever as the first man to land a jet aircraft on the deck of a carrier.

As the Royal Navy's test pilot he flew every category of military aircraft including gliders, fighters, bombers, vertical take-off, amphibious and helicopters, playing a key role in the design of an entire generation of aircraft.

The commemorative event, attended by over 600 guests including HRH The Duke of York KG, paid an emotional tribute to Eric's remarkable career and achievements and included a flypast of more than 40 different naval aircraft, many of which he had flown and tested.



Sea Vixen and Vampire

[Picture: Crown Copyright]

Born in 1919 in Leith, near Edinburgh, Eric Brown joined the Fleet Air Arm in 1939 as a fighter pilot, initially flying the Blackburn Skua. In early 1941 he joined 802 Naval Air Squadron flying Martlets on board HMS Audacity. Eric described landing on her tiny deck as: "challenging to say the least!"

Eric was a keen practitioner, pioneer and advocate of naval aviation all his life. He achieved many notable firsts including the first landing on an aircraft carrier in a twin-engine Mosquito, the first in an Airacobra tricycle undercarriage aircraft and the first in a jet powered Vampire. Testing up to eight different aircraft a day by 1944, and speaking perfect German, he was appointed as chief pilot on a joint UK/US mission to retrieve Germany's most closely guarded technological secrets. He flew many captured German aircraft, including their top fighter, which was 125mph faster than our equivalent.

The following article was in the Scottish Daily Record.



Re-united: Britain's greatest ever pilot and the infamous rocket powered Messerschmitt Me 163B-1a Komet that he flew seven decades ago.

Captain Eric Brown Fleet Air Arm CBE flew the Komet on 10th June 1945. Under instructions from Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill - who wanted to learn as much as possible about Germany's technological weapons - Capt Brown was part of a mission tasked with testing rocket aircraft and bringing them back to Britain.

Reaching speeds of up to 600mph, the Komet was the only rocket-powered fighter aircraft ever to have been operational and was the fastest aircraft of the Second World War, but the explosive rocket fuels powering the motor made it highly dangerous to fly.



University Air Squadron 1939.

Capt Brown was reunited with the aircraft on a visit to the National Museum of Flight at East Fortune, East Lothian in the autumn of 2015.

The former Royal Navy test pilot said: "I was pleased to have the opportunity to see the Komet again, 70 years after I flew it. I was very determined to fly this rocket aircraft back in 1945 because to me it was the most exciting thing on the horizon, a totally new experience.

"I remember watching the ground crew very carefully before take-off, wondering if they thought they were waving goodbye to me forever or whether they thought this thing was going to return.

"The noise it made was absolutely thunderous, and it was like being in charge of a runaway train; everything changed so rapidly and I really had to have my wits about me.

"I had been used to the top fighters in the game with rates of climb of about 3,000ft per minute, but this thing climbed at 16,000ft per minute.

"The angle of climb was about 45 degrees and I couldn't see the horizon. It was an incredibly volatile aircraft, and its operational record - just 16 kills and 10 aircraft lost in combat - made it, in my opinion, a tool of desperation."



Hero: Captain Brown with the infamous Messerschmitt Me 163B-1a Komet

Pilots who flew the Komet wore special rubber suits to protect themselves in the event that the fuel leaked as it was so corrosive that it would dissolve human flesh on contact. Following its capture at Husum, the Komet went to the College of Aeronautics at Cranfield in 1947. It was later refurbished and eventually donated to the National Museum of Flight by Cranfield University.

Born in Leith, Edinburgh, Capt Brown was the Navy's most decorated pilot and he had flown 487 types of aircraft - more than anyone else in history.

He completed 2,407 aircraft carrier landings and led an extraordinary life. He interrogated Hermann Goring and was one of the first British servicemen to arrive at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

He was the subject of a 2014 BBC2 documentary Britain's Greatest Pilot: The Extraordinary Story of Captain "Winkle" Brown.

Today's pilots are able to fly far more safely thanks to the techniques and technologies he helped to test.



Eric Brown during his service in WW2

An interview with Capt Brown is displayed on an interactive digital touch-screen alongside the aircraft in the redeveloped hangars which opened in spring 2016. The hangars present military, commercial and leisure flight and for the first time, explore in detail the human stories linked to individual aircraft.

Steve McLean, general manager at the National Museum of Flight, said: "An important element of the redevelopment at the National Museum of Flight is the opportunity to tell the human stories behind some of our aircraft using interactive digital displays.

"We were delighted to record the extraordinary story of his test flight in our Komet, and look forward to sharing that story with our visitors."

SIGNAL PAD!

Please submit your articles for the next edition of, "Battlefleet" to Stuart Fieldhouse.

fintactica@googlemail.com

The larger size of "Battlefleet" compared to AGB means that your longer articles have a home. Your help is required to maintain the high standard of previous editions.

Colours 2016 will be held on Saturday 10th September at the racecourse in Newbury. Salute 2017 will be held on Saturday 22nd April at the Excel Centre London, this year's theme being "The Russian Revolution".

I've put application forms in for both based on the Dvina river gunboat parti game we ran at this year's naval wargames weekend. We can expect confirmation for Colours by 14th August and for Salute by end of October. Note that we didn't get a table at this year's Salute but given their first come first served approach they are now operating and this year's theme I am reasonably confident of our chances of getting a table this time round.

If anyone wants to come along to help run either of the games, please get in contact with myself.

Thanks

Simon Stokes

simonjohnstokes@aol.com

Coming in September's AGB: - Peter Pig, Talos and Greek Mythology, Beauty and the Battleship, the Sea Quiz and lots more.

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

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