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# All Guns Blazing!

## Newsletter of the Naval Wargames Society

### No. 274 – AUGUST 2017

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#### “ARMADA”.

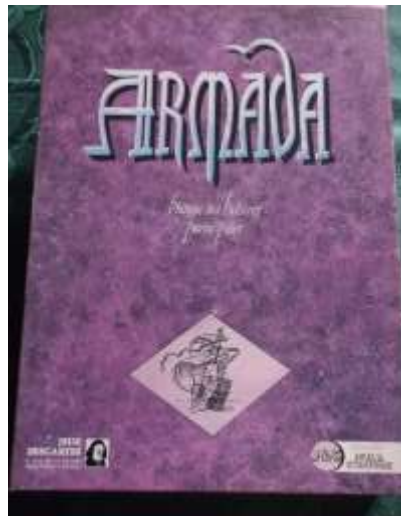
No, not what you think....but a naval board game produced by Jeux Descartes of Paris. Invented about twenty five years ago by Phillipe des Pailleures and Patrice Pillet, and guess what? I bought mine for £2.50 in the local Charity shop. It's an interesting game, not unlike Waddington's '*Buccaneer*' in some ways, but with more land based action to support the ship to ship stuff. I thought there were links to '*RISK!*' as well, by the way. I've never seen any other games by this French company, but they are obviously exporting as the rules are in English and German as additional languages. Their website shows a substantial range of materials for the wargamer.

The game was played out by my daughter and her boyfriend, both avid board-gamers, and they gave it 7 out of 10. Fair enough, but my reason for this note is what's in the box! First, a very large jigsaw piece base of half a dozen pieces, easy to put together and very sturdy. It's an archipelago as you can see from the photograph, and a little larger than a '*Monopoly*' board. Full colour and most attractive. It could be used as the base for campaigns and wargames with smaller scale models, 1/3000<sup>th</sup> or 1/4800<sup>th</sup> perhaps. It reminds me of the Ursula le Guin "*Earthsea*" map.

The other boon is the twelve metal model ships, with two masts. Sturdy, each is 50mm long with the spar, as you can see. They are 12mm wide and to the top of the masts is 30mm. Immediately I thought of Jack Scruby's early materials and of Don Featherstone's basic models in 'Naval Wargames'. These have some sound potential as wargames models, and can be easily be converted by the addition of rigged masts, or even simple lateen sails possibly; deck detail as required. They could fit in with 'Peter Pig's 1/450<sup>th</sup> 'Pirate' ship range possibly?

The rest of the game consists of about two hundred flat plastic tokens, which could be used as bases. That's it. For two pounds fifty a real bargain.

Rob Morgan



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Designated DDG 113, John Finn is the 63rd Arleigh Burke-class destroyer and the first of her class commissioned since USS Michael Murphy joined the fleet Oct. 6, 2012. John Finn will be able to conduct a variety of operations, from peacetime presence and crisis management to sea control and power projection. John Finn will be capable of engaging in air, surface and subsurface battles simultaneously and will contain a myriad of offensive and defensive weapons designed to support maritime warfare, including Integrated Air and Missile Defense (IAMD) capabilities.

Information on Arleigh Burke class destroyers is available online at

<https://go.usa.gov/xNSys>

The new destroyer honors Chief Aviation Ordnanceman John Finn, who received the Medal of Honor for heroism during the first attack by Japanese airplanes at Pearl Harbor. While under heavy machine gun fire, Finn manned a .50-caliber machine gun mounted on an instruction stand in a completely exposed section of the parking ramp. Wounded multiple times, he had to be convinced to leave his post. After receiving first aid treatment, he overcame the effects of his injuries and returned to the squadron area to supervise the

rearming of returning planes. Finn served throughout the war, earning a commission and eventually being promoted to the rank of lieutenant. He passed away in May 2010 at the age of 100.

Here is reminder of the Quiz 63 Questions and then the Answers.

1. Which navy launched a torpedo armed air-cushion boat in 1915?
2. Where was Haulbowline Naval Base?
3. Name ten British warships named after mammals.
4. Which early destroyer was lost in the North Sea on trials without guns or torpedoes?
5. Which Monitor was intended to serve as Coast Defence Ship at Bombay?

Sea Quiz 63, answers.

Well, I was surprised that question 1 didn't bring more response, but little that happened outside the Royal Navy ever did!

1. It was Austria-Hungary. It was called a 'Versuchsgleitboot.'
2. Haulbowline was at Cork.
3. Well, easy enough! Lion, Tiger, Panther, Lynx, Jackal, Stag, Gazelle, Reindeer, Monkey, Mongoose, Antelope. One odd one, new to me, that 'The Navy' compiler used was Sea Bear.
4. It was HMS Cobra.
5. It was the Monitor Abyssinia.

How did you do?

Rob Morgan



## CORAL SEA

An AV-8B Harrier assigned to the "Tomcats" of Marine Attack Squadron (VMA) 311 lands

aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD 6) during Talisman Saber 17. Bonhomme Richard is part of a combined U.S. - Australia – New Zealand expeditionary strike group, which is undergoing a series of scenarios that will increase naval proficiencies in operating against blue-water adversarial threats and in its primary mission of launching Marine forces ashore in the littorals. Talisman Saber is a biennial U.S.-Australia bilateral exercise held off the coast of Australia meant to achieve interoperability and strengthen the U.S.-Australia alliance. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Diana Quinlan (Released) 170709-N-WF272-818

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USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) is the lead ship of the new Gerald R. Ford class of aircraft carrier, the [first new class in more than 40 years](#) and will begin the phased replacement of Nimitz-class carriers when the ship is commissioned. The US Navy plans to spend \$43 billion developing and building the three new Ford-class ships--Ford, the future USS John F. Kennedy (CVN 79), and the future USS Enterprise (CVN 80). Built by Huntington Ingalls Industries, the Gerald R. Ford class is designed with significant quality-of-life improvements and reduced maintenance. These innovations are expected to improve operational availability and capability compared with Nimitz-class carriers.

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'CHAMPS de BATAILLE'

A superb French magazine discovered.

Sadly, few mainstream wargames journals ever seem to carry notes on European military publications, and so this one has so far been overlooked, indeed overlooked by most English language magazines in the field. It is in regular publication, though the cover price is a lot more than similar UK publications, at some 15 Euros a copy, but it is full colour, cover to cover and has a hefty 116 pages of content. It packs a lot in.

Like many 'glossy' journals, it has in recent years been coming onto the discount market with astonishing regularity. I bought a couple in Bayeaux in Normandy, at the French equivalent of 'The Works' discount bookshop for 1.75 Euros each a couple of years ago, and in what I could best describe as a 'pound shop', I managed to pick up twenty at one Euro each recently. The following day I went back for another five! They are, naturally, entirely written in French, but the text is straightforward, and easily understood. The quality of maps- there are about 20+ in each issue, the number of photographs and very competent illustrations, as well as the bibliographies for each article combine make this an outstanding publication of inestimable value to the wargamer and military historian.

There are two kinds of magazines in existence, 'general' issues, and others which are themed, with additional articles, and these cover a wide range of military, but sadly far from enough naval, campaigns. Air warfare isn't ignored either, but the editors

cannot have served afloat. The themed issues are exquisite, and I'm continuing to search diligently for '*Champs de Bataille: Thematique No. 3*' which deals entirely with wargames, modern and historic and with simulations.

Themed issue number 5 is a very thorough account of the Axis plans for attacking the United States; including the Japanese balloon bomb campaigns, Wake Island, Pearl Harbor and the attack on Fort Stevens in 1942. New research suggests that Japanese balloon bombs landed as far as Texas and Michigan! This issue has a particular value, and continues by dealing with several Italian naval plans to attack New York in 1942-43. These were possible, if moderately suicidal. The midget submarine attack planned for late 1943, would almost certainly have been a success. The German plans were much more of a threat, and drawn up in detail. They even designed a very credible missile to be launched from a Type XXI U-Boat. This issue is interesting.

I picked up a copy of Issue 10 in the general series, 100 pages of articles, mapped and illustrated, including a piece on the Russo-Japanese War, and a most unusual account of the museums and coastal fortifications of Vladivostok. There's a substantial article on Kamikaze warfare to round it off.

Other themed issues deal with Cruiser warfare in WWI, issue 63 has a marvellous and splendidly mapped and diagrammed article on the Siege of Port Hudson in 1863 along with a piece on the Ironclad USS Essex

If you see this magazine when on holiday, buy it! Highly recommended!!!

By the way, '*Champs de Bataille*' consistently refers to a web site some of you will already know....

[www.net4war.com](http://www.net4war.com)

Rob Morgan.



### Sea Quiz 64.

The second question in this selection was enough to raise a fair correspondence, as much on the concept of ‘crediting’ a kill, as on the immense skill of Walker himself. Of course in the late fifties there were scores of men reading ‘The Navy’ who had served with Walker or knew him.

1. Where did the German UB 8 serve in WWI, and what was her fate?
2. How many U Boat kills was Walker RN credited with?
3. What was the first German Dreadnought, and when was she launched?
4. What was the flagship of the Japanese fleet in 1869?
5. What did HMS’s Swiftsure, Triumph, Erin, and Glatton have in common?

Rob Morgan

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One of Dave Manley's photographs taken at the Naval Wargames Weekend and posted on his blog, "Don't throw bloody spears at me".

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### Sea Battles in August.

A truly ‘Glorious’ month at sea, begins on the first with the Nile 1798, 11 French destroyed or taken by Nelson with fourteen and a single sloop. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> there was in 1758 another of those typical 18<sup>th</sup> century encounters between Royal Navy and French men o’war off Madras in India. Another, equally old-fashioned sea fight took place off Dogger Bank in 1781, between Hyde Parker and the Dutch Admiral Zoutman.

The 8<sup>th</sup>, of course is the anniversary of the battle which never was, when Troubridge broke off the pursuit of *Goeben* in 1914. A better day was the 11<sup>th</sup> in 1673, and the second Battle of the Texel, Prince Rupert fought De Ruyter. Another huge encounter took place on the 13<sup>th</sup> August 1704, when Rooke's Anglo-Dutch fleet took on the French and Spaniards off Malaga, saving Gibraltar in a hard long day's fighting. These August days were also the time of '*Operation Pedestal*' in 1942, an unusual sea battle but a battle nevertheless.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> in 1702, Benbow (my favourite naval hero) fought Ducasse off Santa Marta, and two of his Captains were later shot for cowardice. This was a long fight of five days or six. An old sea battle for the 24<sup>th</sup> is Sandwich in 1217, part of the campaign to defeat King Louis' invasion of southern England.

The 28<sup>th</sup> saw the Great War Battle of the Heligoland Bight, which could have been a far greater victory. The month ends with an early use of guns at sea, in the fight of L'Espagnols sur Mer off Winchelsea in 1350, on 29<sup>th</sup>, and the incredible last fight of the *Revenge*, a real sea-fight against 50 or more enemy ships for fifteen hours in 1591. Now that was a battle!

Rob Morgan.

### The Spanish Armada.

#### A few thoughts on a recent book.

It's been a long while since I read a book on the wars with Spain, or indeed since I recall any wargames notes on the subject. But last week, browsing in 'The Works' discount bookshop, I came upon a handful of paperback copies of '*The Spanish Armada*' by Robert Hutchinson, originally published by Orion at £9.99 in 2014, at only £2.99. A decent 400 page read, and one which deals with a few of the 'what if's' of the Campaign and period.

Indeed it is an era with far more to offer the naval wargamer than just two bunches of galleons and armed merchantmen slogging it out up the channel. I only once gamed the Armada proper in a campaign, using the original plan of the Spanish commanders to provide 40+ galleys to accompany the fleet. The raiding power of this group proved unbeatable, whatever the English did and indeed Spinola commanded a Galley Squadron effectively in the waters off Flanders twenty years later! One of the four galleys which actually sailed *Diana* suffered a mutiny and was beached at Bayonne, and the rules we used then included one added for similar problems, plague was another, I think. Galley warfare against southern England has potential for very good games, the 1595 Cornish raid, and of course the 1601 Kinsale landing are examples.

Hutchinson's book includes a lot of the 'other' scenarios which the Armada period offers, I tried out, some years back, Moncada's grounded Galleass '*San Lorenzo*'



against an attempt at boarding with some interesting results. The oarsmen proved useful. The potential of an English 'ambush' of the returning Spanish warships in the Bay of Biscay, or indeed further north, for instance is worth a game. The subsequent 'English Armada' is given a chapter in the book, and again has wargame potential, though observers thought that Spain could barely oppose any attack on her shores after the losses incurred in 1588. I do, incidentally, like the idea of the new Spanish build, '*The Twelve Apostles*' all of 1,000 tons and potentially very powerful. Then there's the 'what if' of the 1596 Armada of 120+ ships of Don Martin which sailed late in that year, and hit a storm. Or the following year's adventure, with 130+ vessels which ended with another storm only thirty miles off Falmouth. Hutchinson gives a brief account of the 1594 Crozon campaign, which gives potential for a further naval encounter. A landing on the Devon coast was anticipated from Crozon as a forward base.

This is a superb book, and includes a very full Order of Battle for both opposing fleets. The possibility of a Dutch element remains of course, and some other member may know of a 1588 Order of Battle for that fleet?

Don't miss this work. Ten out of ten!

Plenty of models about for the 1588 and later campaigns, the 1/1200<sup>th</sup> and 1/600<sup>th</sup> options need no comment, all of them rather pricey. Try instead the 1/2400<sup>th</sup> and delightfully detailed models of Paul Sulley's 'Tumbling Dice' range. They look magnificent on the table top, sea based and full sailed. The range has everything you need for any of these campaigns.

Rob Morgan.



A US Navy P-8A Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA). The UK is ordering 9.  
[Crown copyright]

The nine new P-8A Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft will be operated by number 120 Squadron and number 201 Squadron from RAF Lossiemouth in Moray.



The aircraft's key role will be to help protect the UK's submarine-deployed nuclear deterrent and its two new aircraft carriers. Poseidon will add to the UK's surveillance capabilities and is designed to conduct anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare, search and rescue and intelligence gathering. They can carry torpedoes and anti-shipping missiles.

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For over three centuries, until 1970, all Royal Navy vessels would ring out their ship's bells just before noon every day. The famous call, 'Up Spirits' would go out, calling sailors to report to deck and receive their daily 70ml 'tot', or shot, of rum. But as the bells chimed on July 31<sup>st</sup> 1970, British sailors were issued with their final rum ration and the popular 'tot' tradition was no more.

11<sup>th</sup> July 1935. Royal Navy tradition was endorsed by Admiralty Fleet Order No. 1684. 'The order to "Splice the Main Brace" is to be regarded as authorising the special issue of a ration of one eighth pint of rum to each officer or man of or over 20 years of age who desires it. Officers and men under 20 years of age may receive a special issue of one-twentieth pint lime juice and 1 oz. sugar, and a similar issue may be made to other officers and men who do not desire the rum ration. No money in lieu is allowable. The issue of the special rum ration is to be made under the general conditions laid down in *King's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions*, Art.1827, Clauses 2 and 3, except that the time of issue may be arranged as considered desirable.'

The rum ration was discontinued when it was decided that sailors operating computers and missile systems should be in full control of their faculties.

On January 28<sup>th</sup>, 1970 the House of Commons sat to discuss these concerns in a meeting now known as the 'Great Rum Debate'. Mr James Wellbeloved, Labour MP for Erith and Crayford at the time and an ex-wartime sailor in the Royal Navy, argued that there was "no evidence readily available" to suggest that the rum 'tot' affected the operational efficiency of the Royal Navy, and that in fact the rum enabled the sailors "to face the coming action with greater strength and greater determination".

However, evidence such as that provided by Dr David Owen, the Under-Secretary of State of Defence for the Royal Navy, (and future Foreign Secretary) opposed this view. He stated that if "to an individual's naval tot, is added a proportion of another man's tot, which happens all too frequently" then the individual has the same blood alcohol levels in which it is declared illegal to drive a car in Britain. And so the end of the 'rum ration' was declared, and on July 31<sup>st</sup>. 1970 the Royal Navy sailors boarded their ship's decks to take their last 'tot' of rum, many wearing black armbands in tribute. 'Black Tot Day' was born and each year, on this day, the history of the British Navy is celebrated (and toasted, I am sure, with a 'tot' of rum).

(In the 17th century, the daily drink ration for English sailors was a gallon of beer).

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**The Russian nuclear submarine Dmitry Donskoj sails under the Great Belt Bridge on July 21, 2017, on its way to Saint Petersburg take part in a celebration of the Russian Navy.**

(Picture from the Daily Telegraph's website.)

## **FLOATING FORTRESS**

**US Navy's £4.7billion aircraft carrier steams through the Solent with an amazing fleet of fighter aircraft and 5,000 crew**

The carrier is nearly as long as the Empire State Building is high, and has a top speed that exceeds 30 knots. She is the tenth and last Nimitz Class



**THE US Navy's £4.7billion (US\$12 billion) aircraft carrier has an amazing fleet of fighter aircraft and a crew of 5,000.**

The USS George HW Bush – used in the fight against ISIS in Iraq and Syria is anchored in British waters ahead of a joint US and UK training exercise – Exercise Saxon Warrior. This is one of the largest ever war games co-hosted by the UK and US beginning on Monday 31st July. (Details from The Sun Newspaper website)

## **SIGNAL PAD!**

Welcome to new NWS Member, Ernie Fosker.

Details of July's Sea Battles drew the following comment: Could I add another action for those Rob Morgan listed for July? This is the action off Cape Spada on 19 July 1940 when HMAS SYDNEY, assisted by destroyers, sank BARTOLOMEO COLLEONI and damaged GIOVANNI DELLE BANDE NERE.

Best regards from Australia

Ric Pelvin

Keeping AGB and Battlefleet interesting depends on the members supplying articles for inclusion. Rob Morgan does more than his fair share. Come on people. I do not want AGB to turn into the Rob Morgan and Norman Bell newsletter. So if you have visited a museum, read a good book or want to pass on comments on models or rulesets, email details to me for circulation to members.

Norman Bell

Coming in September's AGB: The Cruiser "Rurik". South China Sea. The Greek War of Independence Fleet. (All from Rob). Plus lots more (he says confidently).

### **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](http://www.navalwargamessociety.org).

Membership secretary: [simonjohnstokes@aol.com](mailto:simonjohnstokes@aol.com)

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## **NWS Events and Regional Contacts, 2017**

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### **NWS Northern Fleet – Falkirk East Central Scotland**

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e-mail: [kenny.thomson@hotmail.com](mailto:kenny.thomson@hotmail.com) - Website: <http://falkirkwargamesclub.org.uk/>

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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](mailto:stuart_barnes_watson@hotmail.com)

3 Clovelly Apartments, Oxford Park, Ilfracombe, DEVON, EX34 9JS

Tel: 01271 866637

Uruguay, SCOW: Southern Cone Orientales Wargamers • Games erupt, inquire to set one off: Bill Owen US telephone is [217-619-0202](tel:217-619-0202), Uruguay 099 834 544 [WmOwen@aol.com](mailto:WmOwen@aol.com) • If Spanish speaking, email & I will get someone who speaks it better. • Soca, Canelones or in Montevideo we can arrange a "Graf Spee 3 Gun Salvo": see her 5.9" gun, anchor & rangefinder salvaged from the ship resting in the harbor, a Real English Tour conducted by British expat staff who were associated with the British Ambassador who won the post-battle diplomacy and subterfuge plus, of course, a GQ3 refight of the battle (fees for features like museum & tour). • Most of the Salvo can even be done during a cruise ship stop in MVD from a Round Cape Horn itinerary between Santiago<->Buenos Aires.

- [wargamecampaign.wordpress.com](http://wargamecampaign.wordpress.com)