



All Guns Blazing!

Newsletter of the Naval Wargames Society

No. 275 – SEPTEMBER 2017

EDITORIAL

Thanks to Simon for booking NWS in at “Colours” for 16th September at Newbury Racecourse. Perhaps you can help Simon run the NWS participation game which could be David Manley’s, “Cannon, Cross and Crescent”. I cannot get there again this year as it clashes with a previous commitment. I have not been able to get to Newbury since 2013. I will have to make an effort to get there next year. Also thanks to Simon for the AAR with its cracking photographs that come as a separate document to this month’s AGB,

Welcome to new member John D’Alton.

I am having a bit of trouble with the distribution of AGB. A couple of AGBs are “returned” as “undeliverable”, each month. People who know more about these things than I, advise that it could be that members’ spam and/or filter settings are blocking receipt of emails with large distribution lists. So if possible mark my email address as, “friendly”, so that you continue to receive AGBs.

NORMAN BELL

Operation SOURCE

Operation Source was a series of attacks to neutralise the heavy German warships – Tirpitz, Scharnhorst and Lützow – based in northern Norway, using X-Class submarines. The attacks took place in September 1943 and succeeded in keeping Tirpitz out of action for some six months. The attack was masterminded and directed from HMS Varbel, located in Port Bannatyne on the Isle of Bute. Varbel (named after Commanders Varley and Bell, designers of the X-Craft prototype) was the on-shore headquarters for the 12th Submarine Flotilla to which the X-Craft belonged. Of the six X-Craft used, X5, X6 and X7 were allocated the battleship Tirpitz, in Kåfjord. X5, commanded by Lieutenant Henty Henty-Creer, disappeared with her crew, believed sunk, during Source. X6 and X7 managed to drop their charges underneath Tirpitz, but were unable to make good their escape as they were observed and attacked. Both craft were abandoned and six crew survived to be captured. For this action, the commanders of the craft, Lieutenant Donald Cameron (X6) and Lieutenant Basil Place (X7), were awarded the Victoria Cross, whilst Robert Aitken, Richard Kendall, and John Lorimer received the Distinguished Service Order and Edmund Goddard the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal.



The forward-deployed Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS McCampbell (DDG 85) departs Sydney, Australia. McCampbell is on patrol in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations in support of security and stability in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jeremy Graham (Released) 170726-N-HI376-044

Here are the Quiz 64 Questions and Answers:

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?

SEA QUIZ 64....answers.

Well, the second question in the list caused some upset, and comment, over numbers and memories. None of which detracted from the immense skill of a single Captain in war at sea. I was surprised at the German gun calibre. Were any manufactured I wondered?


1. The UB8 was given (or sold) to Bulgaria, but went in war reparations to France.
2. 'Officially', aboard his own ships, Stork and Starling, just 13. He was in overall command at the sinking of 25 U Boats. I honestly thought the figure far higher. I bet Doenitz did too.
3. It was SMS Nassau, in March 1908.
4. This was 'Kotetsu', formerly known as the Confederate ram Stonewall.

5. All were British built for foreign powers (lovely term that) but taken into RN service before delivery.


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Rob Morgan asks if anyone has been on-board this French replica at St Malo or Brest. Rob has just missed her a few times and wonders if anyone has a photograph or two for AGB.

The Cruiser 'Rurik'.

I did once play a wargame with this model, but it's lightness and delicacy made it difficult. I was reluctant to handle it at all, and wouldn't have felt able to commit this once-fabled 1/1200th scale Russian Cruiser model to a substantial encounter at sea. Rurik of course was a large cruiser, over 11,000 tons; said to have troubled other Admiralties when she was launched in the 1890's, and quite heavily armed, with 4-8in, and 16-6in guns. Met her end during the war with Japan.

She's a hand-made balsa ship, with wire masts and deck detail and funnels made for scrap-box odds and ends. Painted as she would have been at the outset of the Russo-Japanese War, I believe. This is how I acquired her, no flags or jacks, but well painted. It was some thirty-five years ago, at a small model show here in South Wales, and I think it cost, with a couple of other ships about two pounds. The model is around 120mm long and 25mm beam. I'm astonished how long this hefty warship has lasted, but then it isn't really used at all!

If I'd made her, I think I would have written her details on the keel, but though she must have had a sticker at one time, the glue mark's left behind, there's nothing more to tell than that. The game I played with her was an anti-torpedo boat encounter, and her substantial light armament helped her to survive a series of attacks.

Rob Morgan.



PLAN and far waters.

These days, I seem to pick up a great deal of 'news' (real, not fake) about the distant waters of South East Asia, and the warships and merchantmen which sail them, in all sorts of journals, *The Economist*, *TIME*, *Newsweek* and a host of other international publications seem to be looking to the South China Sea, the island groups and the straits especially as the next international hot-spot. The rise of the PLAN is interesting, and I've been digging out and thinking about using the small number of 1/1200th scale PLAN models I have

Here are a couple of them. The Destroyer is one of the multipurpose '*Luta*' class, there were a dozen in all, armed with the 'Styx' SS-N-2 SSM's, 'Conway's' incidentally suggests that some eight of them were re-armed with British 'Sea Dart' missiles in the late 70's.

The FAC's are of course '*KOMAR*'s', PLAN deployed a large number of them, armed again with 'Styx' and though long vanished from the lists, this was a speedy little missile boat which really worked! One of them, in Egyptian service sank the raiding Israeli '*Eilat*' in 1967, firing missiles from inside the harbour out to sea.

Brilliant little boats, found all over the place, Vietnam, Algeria, Cuba, Indonesia, Syria and Iraq, among others had flotillas. PLAN eventually had about fifty '*KOMAR*'s', the first eight or so transferred from the USSR, the rest built in home yards. One of my favourite post-WWII warships.

Rob Morgan.



SEA QUIZ.....65.

Often, 'The Navy' included letters and notes from correspondents long cast ashore (why do Admirals choose to live so far from the sea in retirement?) asking for information, answers and help. Here are a few gleaned from a very substantial collection. The argument around the answer to number 5 was intriguing.

1. In 1914 the Russian ships Taimyr and Vaigach achieved what first?
2. The first modern Japanese Cruisers were named after what?
3. What were Acheron, Lonsdale and Childers in the 1880's?
4. What calibre gun was intended for the late WWI German L20 Battleships?
5. Russell, victor of La Hogue 1692 is alleged to have been the last what?

Best of luck.

Rob Morgan

War at Sea in September.

A quiet start to this month in terms of naval warfare, but on the 3rd in 1782, another of the interminable encounters off the coasts of India, in this case Trincomalee, between Vice-Admiral Hughes and Suffren took place. On 5th, the fateful action between Rear-Admiral Graves and the Comte de Grasse off the coast of Virginia, nineteen Royal Navy ships against twenty four enemy. Said to be one reason for the fall of Yorktown. Another indecisive action on the 10th in Indian waters, when Pocock fought Comte d'Ache nine against eleven, but the French withdrew. On the same day in 1813, the six strong British Squadron on Lake Erie was defeated by the nine of the US Squadron. On the 11th in 1814, the second battle of Champlain resulted in a further defeat for the British. On the 14th in 1914, the encounter between the British AMC *Carmania* and the German *Cap Trafalgar* saw the only fight to the death between armed liners in naval history! On the 24th in 1568, Drake and Hawkins fought off, San Juan d'Ulloa. On 29th, Blake trounced the Dutch under de With at the Kentish Knock, A fairly quiet month all in all, but if you want to celebrate something, September 29th (1758) is Nelson's birthday.

Rob Morgan.

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Rob Morgan writes for several different Clubs and Organisations. The following article first appeared in "The Foreign Correspondent", the Journal of the Continental Wars Society:

A Note on the Greek War of Independence Fleet, 1821

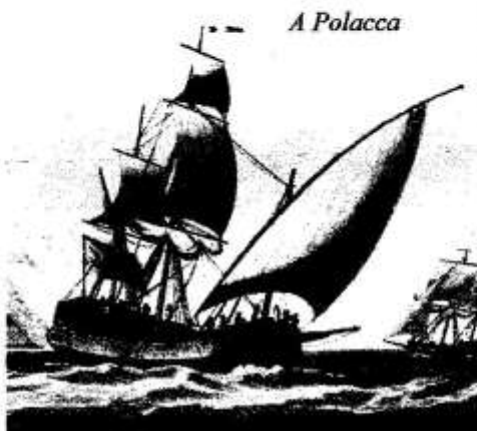
by Rob Morgan

Commentary of any sort on the naval events at the outbreak of the 1821 Greek War of Independence is rare to find. However, 'The Mariner's Mirror', quarterly journal of the Society for Nautical Research (vol:100/1-Jan.2014) contains a very substantial article entitled 'From Lateen to Square Rig' by the well known Greek maritime scholar Dr. Apostolos Delis. As well as a number of decent references, the writer includes a short, yet valuable passage on the subject of the formation of the fleet between 1815-1821, a period of deep crisis for the Greeks with the end of Bonaparte's wars. Greek ships were at that time largely of the Polacca¹ type with some Feluccas² and a few square rigged sailing vessels known as Fregatas. As war became inevitable, the Greek ship owners were prepared, and changed the bulk of their fleet from Polaccas to western European brigs³. And...

...Brigs became the backbone of the Greek fleet, which was their main fighting unit in the War of Independence, and remained the most widespread class of vessel (and of warship) until the 1850's.

The writer mentions the capacity of the Greek fleet, actually three smaller component fleets, from Hydra (49 ships), from Spetses (47 ships), and Psara (40 ships), described in contemporary sources as well armed, '...mostly brigs, but Polaccas, a few fully rigged ships and a few schooners.', and '... identically built as the warships of the Europeans. In fact, nine of the Brigs were bought in Genoa, Venice and Livorno.

In terms of wargaming, although sadly Delis stops short of describing



the events of the war, he considers instead its economic implications as far as shipping's concerned, this provides the opportunity to create a scale fleet for the Greeks. The most obvious choice is 1/2400th scale, from 'Tumbling Dice', using the Napoleonic range ASN 13 (3 in a pack) for the smaller Brigs, and ASN 22, again 3 in a pack for the larger Brigs. This very attractive range of sea-based vessels also includes ASN 20a, a 'Polacre' and ASN 20b, a similar vessel under oars, again three



in a pack. While ASN 21, a 'Privateer Sloop' will suit as a larger square rigged vessel. Turkish vessels.

opponents from the bulk of the list, and don't forget ASN 18 a pack of Dhows, suitable victims for a Greek raid!

Looking around at the larger scales, don't bother with 1/3000th, there are a couple of expensive items in the Langton 1/1200th and possible conversions in the Skytrex and Navwar ranges, but these are barely worth the effort. Much easier if you want a small and reasonably priced flotilla to fight around the Aegean is

'Peter Pig's' 1/450th range. Martin Goddard sells these as 'Pirate ships', but don't be fooled. From 'Range 18', a single Sloop number 6, and a single Medium Warship Brigantine, will serve nicely, add a couple of rowing boats from the same series and you have a fighting fleet. There's a bigger merchantman too, if you need it. Lovely models all metal, and well made, no problem to assemble or paint. There are crewmen and guns too, and the rules which are straightforward are ideal for ship to ship actions. You can convert the ERM 1/300th Dhow to suit this group with remarkable ease. It looks right. Some years ago, Pyro made a Polacca or Xebec of roughly suitable scale, but I think that kit's history now, unless anyone knows of a source?

¹Polacca, a ship with three single-pole masts, often with a lateen sail hoisted on the foremast.

²Feluccas, a wooden ship with a rig consisting of one or two lateen sails.

³A brig is a sailing vessel with two square-rigged masts. During the Age of Sail, brigs were seen as fast

and maneuverable and were used as both naval warships and merchant vessels.

In 'History Today'.....

The September 2017 issue of 'HT' which you'll find in most public libraries, contains an interesting twelve page article by Andy Boyd entitled '*The Tragedy of Force Z*', dealing with the historical interpretation of the loss of *HMS's Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* in 1941. Boyd's interpretation brings some new terminology to the subject, if not any new evidence or understanding. He describes the loss of these two capital ships as '*a classic failure of risk management*'. The options which were open to the Admiralty in terms of deployment, to Capetown or to Ceylon or Australia are well known, and few can ever have believed the description of Force Z as 'raiders' powerful enough to disrupt enemy communications on the South China Sea! Once the ships were at Singapore, Boyd suggests they were inevitably doomed.

Ultimately Boyd's assertion is right. The deployment and demise of Force Z was due to the naval agreements between the US and Britain in 1940-41, and the idea of a British Far Eastern Fleet of five capital ships, ten cruisers and thirty two destroyers as well as ten submarines to be based at Singapore. Given the enormous problems of the Atlantic Campaign, and the Mediterranean, this seems with hindsight an incredible prospect. An interesting article, and with some potential for a map campaign.

Rob Morgan.

As Richard Burton's character in "The Longest Day" said, The "Few" continue to get fewer.

The death of Flying Officer Kenneth Astill Wilkinson aged 99, means that there are now only ten members left in the Battle of Britain Fighter Association, ranging from the age of 95 to 99.

True or urban myth? MacDonald Douglas's advertising slogan for the F4 Phantom II: "The World's Largest Distributor of MiG Parts".

Compulsory Reading?

It was in 'The Times' and so it must be true. President Trump's current National Security Adviser, one H.R. McMaster has decided that the *magnum opus* of the writer many historians regard as the world's first war correspondent should be compulsory reading for all staff in the American White House.

----- Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* is a vast and thoroughly competent book on the ruinous fifth century wars between Sparta and Athens. It still remains a superb account of Athens overwhelming naval power and its gradual erosion and loss. -----

I must admit my copy has been unopened in the past few years, though it was standard reading decades ago when I was an undergraduate. But if this is now a 'must' for the free world, I'd better dust off my Penguin Classic edition (that's by far the best by the way, and reasonably priced) and launch the Triremes again.

Thucydides wrote a magnificent volume, and favoured apparently, by someone called James Mattis, who when the piece was written just a few days ago was US Defence Secretary. He has become fond of quoting Thucydides, which is no mean feat, but of course the great author was something of a wit... "*War is not so much a matter of arms, as of money*" he wrote. Quite so.

Personally, I prefer the work of Xenophon.

Rob Morgan.

Spain's coastguard says it has rescued 600 migrants crossing from Morocco in a 24-hour period amid a spike in the number of migrant arrivals. The rescued migrants were in 15 vessels including toy paddleboats and a jet ski and included 35 children and a baby. The 12km (seven-mile) Strait of Gibraltar is becoming a favourite crossing point and many are choosing cheap, child-sized paddle boats without motors that allow them to bypass people smuggling networks and their fees.



Picture: Crown Copyright.

A MERLIN Mk2 helicopter landed and took off from the flight deck of HMS Queen Elizabeth on 2nd August to mark the centenary of the first aircraft landing on a moving ship at sea.

The helicopter flight was one of several acts of commemoration to mark Sqn Cdr Edwin Dunning's landing on the flight deck of HMS Furious at Scapa Flow on August 2nd 1917. Dunning, aged 25, a member of the Royal Naval Air Service, launched his Sopwith Pup from the carrier, then flew around in a circuit as the ship steamed some 26 knots into the 11 knot wind. Dunning lined up on finals and 'blipped' his engine to slow his approach. The deck crew gathered under his aircraft, grabbed a hold and successfully hauled him to the deck. (Editor's note: I wouldn't want to try that with a F14 Tomcat.)

Dunning attempted to repeat the feat five days later but his engine failed and his aircraft toppled into the sea and he drowned.

Britain's future flagship HMS Queen Elizabeth sailed into her home port of Portsmouth for the first time on 16th August.





After the Great War the armed forces of many countries let their wargame practises slip. A notable exception was the USN. Classroom games followed by live tests were used to develop carrier based and amphibious tactics. In a speech to the US Naval War College in 1950, Admiral Nimitz said: 'The war with Japan had been re-enacted in the game room here by so many people and in so many different ways that nothing that happened during the war was a surprise – absolutely nothing except the Kamikaze tactics towards the end of the war; we had not visualised those'.

In late 1944, Major Hunter Reinburg, commanding officer of 122 Squadron of the American Marine Corps, had a hankering for ice cream. Not surprising perhaps, since he was posted to the sweltering, jungle-covered South Pacific island of Peleliu.

So Hunter set his resourceful team of aircraft engineers to work on Operation Freeze.

After some trial and error, they found that by mounting a large can filled with milk onto the underside of each wing tip of their fighter planes, attaching a stirring shaft to a wind-driven propeller, and then undertaking a training sortie at 30,000 feet, they could supply 100 servicemen with a helping of ice cream every day, whilst simultaneously provoking the Japanese to waste a few shells trying to bring them down.

Simon Stokes is keeping busy; the following will be of interest to (UK) Members.

- **Colours 2017** - NWS are staging a Renaissance Galley participation game at Colours on 16th September using David Manley's new "*Cannon, Cross and Crescent*" rules. If you're planning on attending then look us up and say hello.
- **Zeebrugge Raid Centenary Game** - I've committed to running a game in 1/300th scale based on the Zeebrugge Raid, on behalf of the NWS, at Salute on 14th April next year. The game is commemorating the centenary of the raid, which took place on 23rd April 1918. I also intend to run the game at the Naval Wargames Weekend, Joy of Six and probably Colours 2018 too. I'm also talking to NMRN about running the game at the historic dockyards on or near the centenary itself, which they seem keen to do. If anyone is interested in helping out at any of these events then please drop me a line.

simonjohnstokes@aol.com

*Cannon, Cross and Crescent", is available from "Wargame Vault".

The Battle of Sandwich 1217.

It's the eight hundredth anniversary and no doubt the streets of the old Cinque Ports are thronged with crowds celebrating it! There's a short article by the venerable maritime writer Sean McGlynn in 'BBC History' magazine for September, and the title is 'The Devil's Monk', the subject being Eustace the Monk, pirate and turncoat and deputy commander of the 80 strong French fleet sailing to Southern England to aid Prince Louis, who was holding London. The fleet's commander was Robert de Courtenay, and on a clam sea, a smaller English fleet of 35-40 ships sailed out to meet the French from Sandwich.

In an interesting tactical victory Hubert de Burgh, the English commander captured and sunk most of the French supply vessels and took the flagship. Aboard it was Robert, who was ransomed, and Eustace who lost his head. One of the most interesting points about the battle is that allegedly, the French flagship carried a massive counterweight trebuchet which caused her to be overloaded and slow to handle, hence her capture. Louis of France's invasion brought the first of these immense siege weapons to these shores. The battle led to Louis' withdrawal from England.

Oddly enough, I've wargamed this encounter, years ago, using Navwar cogs and a few smaller 1/2000th Knight Design galleys and small craft. Once the French are slowed by the weight of their supplies and reinforcements, English victory is easier to achieve, by good archery and vigorous boarding. The French flagship apparently was boarded on either side.

Rob Morgan

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, 2017

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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)

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

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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 • 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