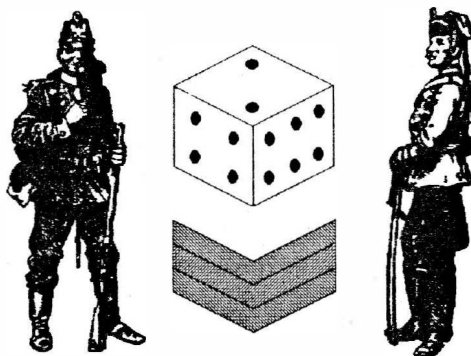


Rank and File



January 1996

Journal of the Tunbridge Wells Wargames Society

Issue 96/1

The Society

Tunbridge Wells Wargames Society meets every Thursday evening and each first Sunday in the month at St. Thomas ChurchHall in Vale Road, Southborough, near Tunbridge Wells. Access is from the London Road (A26) turning down Doric Avenue by the Weavers Restaurant and Q8 Garage, then the first right.

The Sunday meeting normally has a lot of traditional wargaming with model soldiers going on. The Thursday meeting usually has smaller games such as DBA, Hordes of the Things, skirmish games etc., though there are also traditional wargames as well.

Membership

Basic Annual membership costs £5.00 for those in Full employment, £2.50 for others.

This entitles you to attend the Sunday meetings at the Hall, any additional meetings at the Hall during 1995, and to receive up to six copies of the Rank and File. Attendance at a Thursday meeting costs £1.00 or £0.50.

Annual Gold Card membership costs £50.00 or £25.00 (for non-wage-earners). This entitles you to access to all Sunday meetings, Thursday meetings, and extra meetings in 1995, and to the magazine.

Persons attending a meeting and not holding a current membership card will be expected to pay £2.00 or £1.00 for Sunday or Thursday meetings. Visitors to the club for the first time will not be charged, but it is recommended that membership will be taken out at the next meeting to avoid having to pay the £2.00/£1.00 rate.

Membership can be taken out or renewed at any meeting by contacting Andrew Finch.

Sunday Catering

At Sunday meetings tea and coffee making supplies will be available, and the kettle will be filled and heated up, however it is up to individuals to make their own tea or coffee, as at Thursday meetings.

Magazine delivery

Each new magazine will be available at the Sunday meeting after publication, and also to the Thursday meetings for about two weeks. After that, anyone who has not yet received a magazine will receive it by post. After all, if you are a member and have been unable for various reasons to get to a meeting, you are still entitled to the mag.

1996 Subscriptions

These will be up for renewal from the January Meeting onwards.

Please remember to bring your 1995 card with you, because the cards will be validated for 1996 with a sticker. If you have mislaid your 1995 card, please let Andrew Finch know BEFORE the January Meeting, so he can reprint your card before the meeting.

Club Membership List

You will find this displayed by the noticeboard for you to study, get phone numbers from, etc. Many of you will recall that Russell Hanson asked at the last committee meeting for more details about periods played etc. to be in this list. A few members responded to the questionnaire at the end of last year. I am therefore asking that you fill in or change any of your details when (if) you look at the list.

Dates for your diary 1996

4th February

25th February CAVALIER 96

3rd March also Military Book Fair at Spa Hotel
from 10.00 a.m.

NOTE Thursday 7th March there will be no meeting.

7th April

20th April Salute, Kensington

5th May

26th May One Day Jutland

2nd June Also Broadsword at Walthamstow Town
Hall.

23rd June Military Book Fair at Bonnington Hotel,
Southampton Row, London

7th July

4th August

1st September

6th October

3rd November also Military Book Fair at Spa Hotel
from 10.00 a.m.

1st December

If you have any questions or suggestions, please
contact the Editor.

Data Protection Act 1984

Names and addresses of Club members are recorded in a database for the purpose of managing the society subscriptions, distributing Rank and File, and ensuring that members of the society can contact one another when necessary. Names and addresses are not given out to any other organisations. The Society is not required to register with the Data Protection Registrar, as an Unincorporated Member' Club (Exemption 5). Persons who object to their names being held on computer should advise the Secretary, in writing and their names will then be removed from the database.

Club Discounts

You will have noticed (or not as the case may be) that the discounts page has been discontinued.

Military Aviation and Naval Bookfairs 1996

The local fair is held at the Spa Hotel Tunbridge Wells from 10.00 on Sunday 3rd March and Sunday 3rd November 1996. In addition, if you can get to London, the Bonnington Hotel, Southampton Row, Bloomsbury is the venue on 14th January and 23rd June. These are good places to find bargains, though the Tunbridge Wells event had many more vendors and good bargains. The London show seems to attract more serious enthusiasts.

Advertisements

Advertisements will normally run indefinitely, or until removal is requested. If you have an advert you would like putting in the "Rank and File" regularly, please drop me a line.

Rules for Sale

"Perfidious Albion" Naval Pre-Dreadnought

"Into the Laserzone" SF Ground Rules 4th Edition

"Angels One Five" WW2 Dogfight Rules

"Shooting Stars" SF Dogfight Rules

"Within the Laserzone" Campaign Rules for Laserzone.

"John's Fighting Ships" compendium for Perfidious Albion

"Stringbags" WW1 Dogfights

"Enemy in Sight" Naval Rules 1880 to 1945: *available 1996*

"Rolling Thunder" Modern Dogfights: *available 1996*.

Contact Andrew Finch or Alan Butler. £ 4.00 (Special Club Price - they are normally £5.00).

Printing Service

If you have any need for any small printing jobs, such as quick play sheets or rules extracts to make your game go more easily, or have a need for more game counters, then contact Andrew Finch for a quote.

Game damage and wreckage markers can also be produced if specifications are provided.

These can be produced in B&W or colour, as required.

WANTED

25mm Star Wars Figures. also any MPC / AMT kits (A Wing, X Wing, B Wing, Tie Fighters etc, made or unmade, or damaged).

Contact Stuart Hooker

Painting Competition Results and League Table 1996

December 1995

Class 1

- 1st: A Butler, Dwarf Army
2nd: A Butler, Austrian Napoleonic Infantry
3rd: G. Gush, Conscrit Chasseurs de la Garde

Class 2

- 1st: S. Hooker, Vietnam Recon Platoon
2nd: G. Gush, British Airborne Artillery WW2

Class 3

- 1st: A. Butler, German WW2 HQ Group
G Gush, ACW Railway mortar
2nd: S. Hooker, Vietnam Helicopters

January 1996

Class 1

- 1st: A. Butler, Early Artillery
2nd: A. Finch, Gang members

Class 2

- 1st: S. Hooker, WW1 Scots
2nd: G. Gush, Gurkhas
3rd: A Butler, Robots

Class 3

- 1st: G. Gush, Spanish Men o' War
2nd: R. Hanson, Mule gun
3rd: A Butler, S.F. Car.

The League:

Points are scored in each Class with 3 for 1st place, 2 for 2nd and 1 for third. Each persons individual points are then added into the league table (irrespective of the class in which items were entered). The top three scorers after the judging of the November Painting Competition win trophies and vouchers for the Open Day, which will be presented at the AGM in December.

The scores are

Alan Butler	13
George Gush	11
Stuart Hooker	8
Andrew Finch	2
Russell Hanson	2

The 1995 Results were

1st Prize	23½ points	George Gush
2nd Prize	22 points	Alan Butler
3rd Prize	14½ points	Stuart Hooker

Wash my mouth out

On Thursdays and Sundays we have been trying out a G####s W#####p product (of course with the spikes cut off and tuned down for the nearly-normal) called Necromunda. This sounds awful, but the game system itself is very simple.

A group of us have each got a "gang" and these groups randomly ally themselves for a big game. (A small game one on one was not as satisfying, because the social interaction of the large group was missing).

That said, what I am getting at is that a system like this would be very good for running a skirmish game in many different periods. WW2 in Stalingrad springs to mind immediately (Alan even has suitable bits of broken factory).

Watch this space for developments.

Amended Painting Competition Rules for 1996

In the light of the experience of the initial experience gained, the Committee has adjusted the system to clearer rules which will apply from February onwards:

The competition year runs from December to November, and prizes will be awarded at the AGM in December. These will be vouchers for the Open Day (at the time of writing these are worth £15, £10, and £5).

You may only put one entry into any given class, and must have painted it yourself. The owner decides which class it goes in, from the list below. If it is in the wrong class, it will probably not get a vote. Some items will be potential entries in several classes.

Entries may not be entered if they have scored points in a previous TWWS painting competition in any class.

Votes are registered by all members present on the basis of quality of painting, presentation, accuracy etc. Each member gets one vote per class, and you can vote for your own if you want.

Votes will be counted at 4.0'clock by the Secretary, and the winners of 1st, 2nd and 3rd announced. If there are several joint winners (with the same points score) each will get the points shown below. There can be multiple winners of 1st, 2nd and 3rd in each class. This means there will be lots of points available.

The ranking at the end of the year is decided on an individual's total number of points from all classes.

Points mean prizes

First: 3 points; Second: 2 points; Third: 1 point.

If there is a Bye, i.e. no one else put in an entry in a class, 2 points will be awarded in recognition of the effort.

Classes

"The Old World" - Ancient, Napoleonic etc. Wargames Units up to 1900 AD.

"The Twentieth Century" - Post 1900, WW2, Modern. Wargames Units.

"Other Worlds" - Futuristic, SF, Fantasy. Wargames Units.

"Command Groups" - Single Figures and small groups which can include vehicles, standard bearers, dogs, etc. (suitable for Wargames).

"Monsters and machines" - Single vehicles, ships, Montgolfier Hot Air Balloons, anything else.

Editorial Comment

The following two articles have been provided by Alan Butler, and are centred on the game system developed by him and Andrew (as well as the rest of a cast of Thousands) called Shooting Stars. The system is very simple to learn and has offered an ideal game for us to show off at other shows.

We did the first run at Broadsword last year, and will be running the game at Salute, as well as at our own show.

It is a lot of fun, and allows mistakes to be rigorously punished (before your very eyes).

From the system, we have found it apt to be developed further for other games, and the Campaign system has been used in John's Fighting Ships.

If you are about to growl that there are two SF articles in the magazine, do something about it. I will publish what I get (and be damned ?).

Editorial Moan over.

... Oh, and by the way, if you can put articles on PC disk as text or Word docs, it makes me much happier. Short articles get published quicker than long ones as well.

SMOKING TALONS

A *Shooting Stars* encounter in which several theories are shot full of holes!

by Alan Butler

PRE-FLIGHT BRIEFING

This article describes an interesting space battle that we played recently using *Shooting Stars*, the space fighter game. It was our regular Thursday evening meeting and David and Michael wanted to try out some new spacecraft designs of their own. After some discussion, it was agreed that they would fly a Routine Patrol using 200 points worth of their own designs against everyone else who would pick existing spacecraft included in the rules. Opposing them that fateful night were Daren and James, with Chris as technical advisor.

HANGER DECK

For reasons best known to themselves, David and Michael are flying as the DNA Mercs, and have decided on using four "Fireflies" and four "Gnats", both lightweight and fast single seater fighters. They decided to use 2 matched pairs Fireflies and Gnats each. The Firefly packs a considerable forward firepower of four miniguns, but with all that hardware and shielding it carries ammunition for only four bursts per gun and has to sacrifice all Electronic Warfare protection. The Gnat is a very small attrition fighter, carrying one 10 Megawatt laser and one rather nervous pilot. Again, all protection has been left off to keep the cost down.

Details of these craft can be found at the end of this article if you want to try them out.

Daren and James debated choice of craft for some time, with technical advice from Chris who was more of an old hand. He advised getting at least two "Nightmares" for their forward firepower of 6 x 10cm blast cannon:

"Just like a camera - point and shoot!"

They also picked two "Skuas" for their rear gunner with a 10 Megawatt laser, and four hardpoints fitted with a torpedo load for long range engagements. James bought a "Sword":

"Cos it goes fast, kills things and gets you home!"

READY ROOM

David and Michael have costed the points values for eight pilots and start rolling dice for their skills. Michael's face darkens as the dice refuse to roll high and a mediocre group of pilots is assembled for the mission.

"This appears to be a trial run with civilians!"

Daren, James and Chris have decided to call themselves the Red Talon Fighter Group, and they roll for five pilots and three gunners, and everyone appears to be happy with the skills. They mount up pilots and crew in spacecraft and transfer to the tabletop.

COMBAT ZONE

The table is set up and terrain diced for, giving an open field of an asteroid and two small planetoids drifting slowly across the table.

Turn one opened with the Red Talons flying on in a loose group on their left flank, whilst DNAM appeared in 2 groups of four accelerating straight towards the opposing craft, with the clear intension of closing to gunfighting range

Turn two saw The Red Talons loose off several torpedoes from the Skuas, whilst the Sword flew across the front of the swarm light fighters, drawing several of them around to follow it. Chris, flying the Nightmares, followed at a more sedate pace, lining up dust-off fire for the Sword:

"I'll sit back here whilst you get stuck in - er ...I mean I'll cover you!"

The torpedoes fail to hit anything because the targets dodge behind an asteroid which blocks their seekers. The forward firepower of the Nightmares is brought to bear, and Chris's first volley of charged particles hits a Firefly buzzing around the Sword but bounces off the armour. A Gnat next to it is not so lucky and explodes in ball of fire. Shooting by DNAM hits a Skua with a minigun burst doing some damage, but everything else misses.

Turn three has the Red Talons muttering that their torps are now useless because the range is now too short. They try to track the small buzzing swarm of Gnats but it proves easy for DNAM to keep very close to the heavier and slower craft and out of the fire arcs of the fixed weapons. The Turret gunner in the Sword fires at a Firefly and does some damage, but most of the Red Talon firepower has no targets or misses outright. DNAM have no such problems. Their craft are now tailing the slower craft and open up with minigun bursts. A Skua takes 8 points of damage in the hull and its underslung weapons jam. One of Chris's Nightmares takes another minigun burst resulting in some hull damage but more importantly crippling the drive and setting fire to the auxiliary systems. A final burst of minigun fire rips into the other Skua, which was damaged last turn and this proves too much for the structure and it falls apart, scattering burning debris. Recrimination amongst the Red Talons is heard over the air waves.

On Turn four the Nightmare pilot puts out his fire and the two Nightmares try to cover each others tails, but the remaining Skua and the Sword are surrounded. The Sword turret gunner fires at a Gnat and it disintegrates, the pilot ejecting. Both Nightmares now acquire targets, but do a disappointing one point of damage in one of the salvos but destroying the leading Firefly in a hail of blaster fire with the other. The pilot of this Firefly manages to fire back before being consumed, and as luck would have it hits something vital on the Nightmare. Coolant pours out of the wing before it breaks off and the craft tumbles over, out of action. The last Firefly has the remaining Skua in its sights and easily destroys it with minigun fire. Michael is seen looking at the ammunition track of his craft with a worried expression.

Turn five opens with heated radio traffic as the Sword manoeuvres off leaving the remaining Nightmare to its fate. Luckily for Chris, a Firefly incautiously flies across the front arc and takes a salvo of blaster fire, which destroys it. The pilot ejects but is hit by debris. However, during this, another Firefly has got round behind the Nightmare and minigun fire cuts into it, destroying it. It is noticeable that the Fireflies are now out of ammo!

Turn six sees the Sword weaving desperately and frantically, and its turret laser hits a Gnat, destroying it. The Gnats reply with laser fire doing just one point of damage. It appears that James' faith in the quality of the Sword is justified.

DEBRIEF

The game is now over, having taken about two real hours to complete. Analysis shows the Red Talons have lost four craft, worth 146 points and pick up a pilot and gunner, but the DNAM have lost 5 smaller craft worth 123 points, recovering two of their pilots. DNAM are therefore the winners of the encounter, much to their surprise considering the initial pilot skills.

David and Michael admit they were lucky at one vital moment around turn two when they were able to dodge torpedoes by flying behind an asteroid, since their small craft have no defence against tracking torpedoes, and also they did enough damage in turn 3 and 4 to cripple the opposing fleet. Things could have been very different if the Red Talons had mounted turreted weapons or missile launchers!

However, it goes to show that certain designs are not optimised for close-in dogfighting, and even poor pilots can out-maneuvre slow, lumbering craft like the Skua - if they survive the underwing torpedoes it generally carries. Debate about the relative values of craft and their tactical deployment is heard late into the night...

The details of the DNAM craft are as follows:

Firefly			Gnat		
Hit Points	6	1 x pilot	Hit Points	1	1 x pilot
Movement	16	4 x miniguns (FF)	Movement	16	1 x 10 MW laser (FF)
Defensive	17	4 x rounds each	Defensive	16	
Armour	4		Armour	1	

GUNFIGHTERS!

Customising fighters in *Shooting Stars*

by Alan Butler

MISSION BRIEFING

The designs of spacecraft available in *Shooting Stars* provide a mix of equipment and weapons which can be found in combat zones everywhere. A quartermaster and armourer from a combat fighter wing can usually find something ready to use for any mission. However, if there is time available, and the mission and tactics, and the capabilities of the crew, are known beforehand, various modifications can be made on the Hanger deck to optimise the designs, and match the capabilities of the craft to the available pilots. This article puts forwards some design modifications which armourers and Squadron commanders can consider when their craft will be getting into close melees with the opposing craft at ranges of one to three hexes, where torpedoes are next to useless and pilots must switch to guns and rely on their gunnery skills to hit targets and good shielding and armour to protect them. The following modifications retain the basic hull design and make changes only to weaponry, leaving the points values are unchanged, unless otherwise stated.

Squadron commanders should be aware that these design changes mean that certain missions will not now be available to these craft, except as escorts to mission -specific craft, since the craft cannot have any underwing stores which can be used to fulfill mission requirements. They should consider the trade-off of firepower for loss of flexibility and design their fleet rosters accordingly.

HANGER DECK

1. Sword Mk II

This basic Mk I design is a strong all-rounder with a strong forward punch of an ion cannon, with a turret gunner with a 10 Mw laser and a pair of 10cm blasters covering the tail. It also has a very powerful point defence and relatively large torpedo capacity of 5 racks carried internally. The drive is average at 16 and the defensive shielding a little weak at 12, but with good armour at 3.

The Mark II has the same hull and ion cannon for the pilot, but mounts all its defensive armament of 4 x 10cm blasters in a turret. In order to make the turret fit into the existing hull, all the torpedo racks have to be deleted and the point defence reduced to 4.

2. Serpent MkII

This is small fairly fast fighter which is normally used to launch torpedoes from its 2 hardpoints to break up enemy formations before joining a melee. Its standard armament of two 10cm blasters and armour of 3 normally enable it to give a good account of itself. However, if you wish to delete the torpedo hardpoints, the hull can be fitted with an additional 10cm blaster.

3. Serpent MkIII

The use of blasters ensure adequate damage to the target if it is hit. Actually hitting the target relies on the pilot's skill however. If the pilot has below average skill use the hull as above, but change the armament to 5 x 10 Mw lasers.

4. Modernised Nightmare 1a

This is a design which is already good in close up fighting and it is hard to fault to forward firepower of 6 x 10cm blasters. With a drive of 15 and armour 4 it can usually survive well. However, it does suffer from old-fashioned shielding and tends to be easy to hit with a Defensive Value of 13. However, the hull can be modernised by ripping out the power hungry 20 Mw Laser, which is seldom used in close melees anyway, and using the power to uprate the DV to 15.

This changes the points value to 31

5. Buzzard MkII

The Buzzard seems to have a split personality. On the one hand it carries a large torpedo load for a small fighter, which are best used at a large stand off of about 15 to 20 hexes. On the other hand, it mounts a forward firing disrupter which is best used as close as possible! It is also very fast, and this speed is best used to out-manoeuvre an

opponent at close range. Modifications can be made by ripping out all the torpedo hardpoint and tracking equipment and the useless 10 Mw laser and installing instead another 2 disrupters. This makes this craft a very aggressive machine, but the difficulty of hitting the target with disrupter fire means that it is best made use of by experienced pilots.

6. **Baiter MkII**

Another good all rounder for close in fighting, which can be improved by removing the torpedo hardpoint and tracking equipment and fitting an extra disrupter into the hull. This craft initially suffered from some reliability problems in service, but the Mk 2 is a standard front line fighter at 25 points.

7. **Baiter MkIII**

As above, but for pilots with poor gunnery skills. Exchange all the forward armament for 7 x 10 Mw lasers.

8. **Modernised Thunderclap 1a**

In the basic game, this craft is a death-trap, although quartermasters still buy the design because it is so cheap! This attractive price tag can be nearly all retained, and the craft given a bit more survivability by making it not obsolete and deleting all the torpedo hardpoints and tracking equipment, and using the spare mass then available to increase the armour level to 4.

The points value is changed to 17

SUMMARY

Name	BPV	Crew	MA	DV	AC	Hits	Armament
Sword II	34	2	16	12	3	9	Pilot: Light Ion cannon (F) Gunner: 4 x 10cm blasters (T) EW2 PD4
Serpent II	12	1	15	14	3	3	Pilot: 3 x 10cm blasters (F) EW1
Serpent III	12	1	15	14	3	3	Pilot: 5 x 10Mw lasers (F) EW1
Nightmare 1a	31	1	15	15	4	8	Pilot: 6 x 10cm blasters (F) EW2 PD3
Buzzard II	16	1	18	14	1	4	Pilot: 3 x light disrupters (F) EW1
Baiter II	25	1	17	15	3	6	Pilot: 2 x light disrupters (F) plus 2 x 10cm blasters (F) EW1 PD1
Baiter III	25	1	17	15	3	6	Pilot: 7 x 10Mw lasers (F) EW1 PD1
Thunderclap 1a	17	1	16	14	4	4	Pilot: 4 x 10 Mw lasers (F) EW2

News from the Front

"But it's on the back page!"

John's Fighting Ships

Many of you have been wondering what has happened to John's Fighting Ships, well it is actually ready, and will be released at the Open Day. The reason for the delay is that there are pages and pages of ship diagrams all ready for you to copy and use.

This is an unashamed bit of blurb, but I only typed it all, John, and others, wrote it. (I must admit that a couple of bits are mine).

JFS incorporates a section of Rule Clarifications and suggestions which have stemmed from experience in use. A couple of incongruities in the rules have also been found and eradicated.

Obsolete Weapons have now found their true place in the world, and also rules for the construction of small ships have been finalised.

The quick play rules which we used at Tsu Shima have been tidied up, and Alan Butler has provided an alternative gunnery resolution system which reduces the amount of dice rolling.

I have written a "reverse engineered" suggestion on ship construction, which uses the original construction system to determine a points value.

A full "mapless" campaign system has also been developed, with targets for shore bombardments, forts to defend ports, and all sorts of goodies.

All this is rounded off with masses of ship record sheets (which I spent Christmas formatting on the PC).

Stringbags

Our rules venture into WW1 air warfare is also ready and will be available at the Open Day. These rules use the mechanisms we used in Angels 15, and offer a fun game. We did some test runs on Thursdays, and subsequent examination of "the books" indicated that the result we got on the test was actually correct. I must admit it surprised me.

We have included Zeppelins as well, and refined the rules for them after a test run on a Thursday. They are very vulnerable if you get that gas bag hit!

I quite like the Esoteric weapons. Baron von Nigling will not go up without his trusty Blunderbuss, and Squadron Leader Fidgett-Smythe believes in the power of the sack of potatoes (though the mess are wondering where they keep disappearing to).

Enemy in Sight

This is the working title for our latest venture, this time into "wet bits".

The system has been relatively quick to design, and is intended to give a very different game to the rather bland General Quarters or the picky, calculator ridden rules which I tested while trying to find some I liked. The rules feature 15 minute moves, a gunnery system very like John's, a damage system like our air rules, and are intended for use with small scale (1/3000 or 1/2400) ships.

They have some devilish command rules, and players have to make some difficult decisions where to put their commanders. The system will also allow, for example, some Japanese commanders to be better than Americans in 1941/42, by using a different die type to generate their game values. You will need good commanders to lead the fleet, but good gunnery commanders to win the battle.

There will, of course, be a campaign system in there when they are finished.

They will be easy to pick up and use, and will include a large number of ready prepared lists of ship data. A supplement will be available with (literally) masses of ships.

I hope to have them ready for our Jutland game, and they are designed with that sort of game in mind.

We will be testing them at the February Sunday meeting.