

RANK AND FILE

The Newsletter of the Tunbridge Wells Wargames Society
February 2001
(Naval Warfare Number)

EDITORIAL

Contributions

I have not received any contributions lately, and have now reached the end of those I have, so there cannot be another 'Rank and File' until some more come in. Remember anything wargame- or military history orientated is welcome. It doesn't have to be long; in fact short items are extremely useful when making up the newsletter. Here are a few suggestions which might help:

- Products seen or tried
- Websites, books or magazines you've found useful or interesting or otherwise
- Battle reports –wargames or historical battles (especially if you have ideas about how to wargame them.
- Who was the best general ? – ever, or in a particular period or war ? – likewise for armies ?
- Reports on the rules you use or have tried.
- Visits to battlefields, military museums or other relevant places.
- Your ideas about wargames, or wargame or historical tactics.
- Your most (or least) favoured armies and how you use them.
- Army lists for use with different rules.
- Things you want to know or to buy or sell.
- Military quizzes, crosswords or competitions (we had some good ones in the past where a historical or semi-historical situation was described and readers invited to say what they would have done).
- Your modelling or painting and basing methods. Things that are familiar to you can be useful tips for someone else. Likewise with wargames scenery. What paints/glues/varnishes etc do you use (or not use) and why
- Comments, criticisms, additions or discussion on things in Rank and File

There are lots of other possibilities. PLEASE contribute something if you want Rank and File to continue.

NOTE FOR CONTRIBUTORS

The editor can and will type things out, so handwritten material is welcome, and we should be able to scan and use maps, drawings and photos. Of course typed material is easier to use and thus likely to appear sooner, and an e-mail attachment or 3.5 disc with the contribution as a Word document or as text only would be **ideal**, hugely reducing the labour involved for the editor (who should be able to handle WordPerfect documents too).

SUNDAY MEETINGS

December 2000 – The Annual General Meeting

There were about 18 present for the meeting, which, as usual, started with the AGM, the Committee taking their seats on the stage against an exotic Eastern backdrop! Minutes of this will be available, so I won't go through it here, except to give the election results below. In our normal Soviet tradition, there were no opposed elections, so the existing committee and officers remain the same, but thanks are due, firstly to the outgoing Secretary, Chris Avery, and secondly to those who volunteered their services. Paul Colebrooke agreed to fill the vacancy for Secretary, and out two youngest members, Ross Ovenden and Philip Morton not only came forward as Committee members, giving us our official four, but also agreed to organise and record the monthly Painting Competition for 2001.

SUNDAY MEETINGS (Continued)

December 2000 – The Annual General Meeting (continued)

On the Wargaming side, there were four games. Tim Freeman and Paul Hookway were fighting the Eastern Front in World War 2, using 15mm models and Command Decision 3 rules. Rodney Somerville, Eric Hall, and Paul Colebrooke were using the Principles of war Napoleonic rules for an encounter between Austrians and French, also in 15mm. Alas that we must admit our dark secret, but otherwise Fantasy prevailed. Alan Butler, Chris Avery and the Monroes were involved in a game of Warmaster (described as 'Fantasy with more command and control') using 10mm Games Workshop armies. Andrew Finch, spectating, said it seemed good fun. Your editor brought his Hordes of the Things 15mm armies, by now a traditional sight at the December meeting, and with Malcolm Dove, Terry Shoebridge, Philip Morton, Ross Ovenden and Michael Page three battlefields were set up and a series of ferocious one-to-one battles fought, possibly the high point of which came when two opponents almost simultaneously turned themselves into frogs when their spells went wrong, leaving their armies leaderless ! Luckily I had just laid in a fresh supply of frogs from Chariot Miniature, who produce a pack containing a 'plague' of them. Otherwise the main military lesson seemed to be that it's hard for my Dwarves (a mass of Blades led by a Hero General) to win, being slow-moving and having no-one good on rough terrain. Plans are in train to rectify this !

January 2001

Despite being the only 2001 Sunday meeting not on the first Sunday of the month, this one was well attended, with about 21 present, a large number of games, and a very big entry for the Painting Competition. Unfortunately, my notes taken at the time have been mislaid, so the only game I can mention is the Eastern Front snow battle representing the Russian breakthrough north of Stalingrad. The idea was that the defending Romanians got points for the tanks etc they destroyed, while the Red Army points came from getting their forces off the table at three designated points. They were thus not expected to be able to stop the Russian hordes, but under the able leadership of Malcolm Dove and, aided by the inept generalship of the Soviet commanders, myself and Dennis Redhead, kept them back to win by an enormous margin – I think it's '198 to 11' that Malcolm has mentioned at every subsequent meeting ! Apologies for the lack of information.

COMMITTEE FOR 2001

Chairman (and Editor)	George Gush
Treasurer	Malcolm Dove
Secretary	Paul Colebrooke
Committee	Alan Butler (also Open Day Organiser) Philip Morton) Ross Ovenden)are also Painting Competition Organisers) Terry Shoebridge

CLUB ARMIES

The Committee have asked me to remind members of the existence of our Club Armies, which are certainly under-used at present. Paul Colebrooke has been having a sort out of them, and has discarded the plastic figures which were in a poor state, and is upgrading the British and French 15mm Napoleonic armies for use with Principles of War Rules. The committee are getting a couple of sets of these rules which will be kept with the armies for the use of club members. The club also owns several 15mm Ancient armies based to DBA rules, plus some copies of these rules. These are excellent for a quick game and should be of interest for practice in view of the news about One Day Campaigns on page 4 below. DBA rules are very similar to 'Hordes of the Things' which many have played, and you can learn to play in about 10 minutes at the most. The One Day DBA unlike the other One day Campaigns will be a sort of individual tournament in which you will get to play a series of other people using a series of different armies and battlefields; it will be more for fun than competition but there probably will be a few prizes.

PAINTING COMPETITIONS

A CHANGE

At the AGM there was some discussion of the current system of running the painting competition. Philip Morton recommended returning to the former system of basing prizes on overall results rather than class results on the basis that this gave more people a chance to win something at the end of the year, while others pointed out that the current system was better for a good painter who only entered in one class. A straw poll showed a majority for returning to the old system, and it was agreed that the new Committee should discuss the matter. They have now done so, and have decided that the current system so far as points, classes etc. are concerned, will be retained. Prizes at the end of the year, however, will not be six per class as at present, but will be based on overall rather than class positions, meaning that anyone entering at least occasionally stands a chance of at least a small prize. As it does not involve any change in the actual monthly running of the competition, the change will be in force for 2001.

Current results, from Philip Morton and Ross Ovenden (after January 2001 meeting)

Class 1:	1 st R.Somerville	7 points
	2 nd G.Gush	4
	3 rd Eric Hall	3
Class 2:	1 st = R.Somerville	6
	1 st = G.Gush	6
	3 rd = P.Hookway	3
	3 rd = P.Morton	3
Class 3:	1 st P.Morton	4
	2 nd T.Wyatt	3
	3 rd = R.Somerville	2
	3 rd = E.Hall	2
	5 th G.Gush	1
Class 4:	1 st R.Somerville	5
	2 nd = G.Gush	4
	2 nd = P.Morton	4
	4 th T.Wyatt	3
	5 th = E.Hall	2
	5 th = T.Freeman	2
Class 5:	1 st T.Freeman	7
	2 nd = R.Somerville	6
	2 nd = G.Gush	6
	4 th P.Morton	3
Overall:	1 st R.Somerville	28
	2 nd G.Gush	25
	3 rd P.Morton	14
	4 th T.Freeman	9
	5 th E.Hall	8
	6 th T.Wyatt	5
	7 th P.Hookway	3

ONE-DAY CAMPAIGNS FOR 2001

One-day campaigns are those big multi-player games involving a lot of players and usually several tables, which have been a big feature of this club in the past, but have sadly been less frequent lately. The Committee hope to revive them and the following are planned for 2001 (exact dates will be announced when the hall has been booked).

MAY 2001: WW1 Sea Battle JUTLAND. 'General Quarters' rules'; Organiser Paul Colebrooke

SEPT. 2001: Multi-player Ancient/Medieval Competition to DBA rules; Organiser Terry Shoe bridge

NOV 2001: WW2 Eastern Front Winter Battle; Gush Rules, 1/76th models: Organiser George Gush

Contact the organisers for details and to put yourself down for the game. All will be at the Speldhurst Hall and will run from about 9 to about 6 (bring sandwiches !). You do NOT need experience, armies or rules to take part and there should be opportunities for practice games at club meetings beforehand. It must be emphasised that the success of such games depends on as many club members as possible turning up for them – don't say "I don't like naval games" or whatever, this is a chance to try things you haven't played before and such games in our (long) experience are always good fun and give a change from the ordinary small-scale games. If you can provide armies, troops, scenery or anything else useful, let the appropriate organiser know.

VICTORY IN THE CORAL SEA

An account of Operation Solomons 2000

By

Professor William H. Peabody

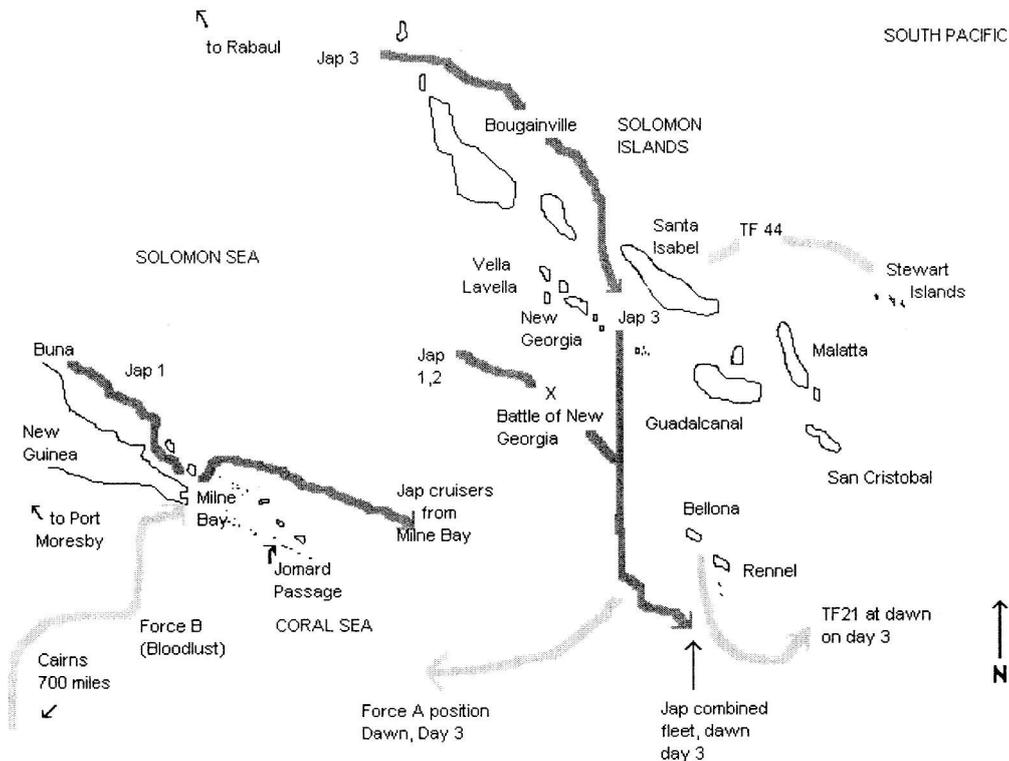
Professor Peabody has had full access to all the relevant documents and has personally interviewed many of the surviving participants. As Admiral Ukan Konga chose the honourable course of committing hari kari (dying with the cry of "Ukan Konga no more!" on his lips) his motives at crucial moments in the campaign are likely to remain as much a mystery to the historian as they were to his staff at the time.

The Japanese Operation A-Go-Go-VI, as conceived by the naval staff in Tokyo, called for amphibious landings at Milne Bay in New Guinea and in the Solomons, on the flanks of a drive by the main fleet South East into the Coral Sea, supported by the two fleet carriers operating North of the Solomons. This overall plan was neatly sabotaged by the Japanese admiral, who united his whole force in the Coral Sea. The Emperor was said to be seriously displeased when this was discovered and Ukan Konga was sent new orders at 1400 on day 2 to send Force 2A to cover Milne Bay and to seek out an engagement with main enemy before they could be reinforced, but this was to lead to disaster !

On the first morning, however, fortune seemed to favour the Japanese, HM Submarine Tiptoe being sunk by air attack when surfaced in the Jomard Passage SE of New Guinea, and the daily recce Hudson from Cairns being jumped by Zeros SE of Milne Bay. At noon, however, the British force A from Brisbane rv'ed with Task Force 21 off Bellona Island, and the combined force began to operate North towards the Solomons.

The Battle of Jomard Passage took place just before 1300. HM Submarine Totem, submerged, torpedoed the leading Jap surfaced submarine in a group of six proceeding in what the Japs fancifully called a 'wolf pack', whereupon the remainder turned tail. More like a sheep pack !

As the afternoon wore on, Australian coast-watchers reported a Japanese convoy and escorts entering Milne Bay. At 2030, Avengers from the Ark Royal mounted an air strike and sank the transport Tei Maru for the loss of two of their number. Shortly before last light (2200) Rear-Admiral Bloodlust led his cruisers and destroyers into Milne Bay to attack the Japanese landing operation which was now in progress. He got the worst of the gun duel with the Japanese cruisers, however. HMS Sydney was sunk and three destroyers heavily damaged before Bloodlust retired into the night. The score was somewhat evened when two British submarines entered Milne Bay shortly before midnight, their torpedoes sinking the cruiser Sendai and the transport Kuri Maru, and damaging the Tokyo Maru.



Meanwhile, a Japanese landing had also been reported on Santa Isabel in the Solomons. This was attacked successively by HM Submarines Tabard and Tomahawk, who torpedoed two transports and a landing ship. Tomahawk was sunk by depth charges as it withdrew. This success was due entirely to the genius of 'Fuzzy' Dimwitz, the overall allied commander, which ensured the submarines were in the right place at the right time, no mean achievement when there had been so little prior information on Jap movements.

As dawn broke on the second day, the sky over Santa Isabel was suddenly black with Allied planes as 'Fuzzy's' carrier air wings swooped on the Japs. The cruiser Yura was sunk, together with another landing ship and two destroyers, and the cruiser Haguro heavily damaged.

At 0630 Allied air recce saw an amazing sight, the RV of the Jap main fleet with its supporting carriers and the 'Vanguard' force south of New Georgia. All the eggs in one basket!

As the morning progressed tension was rising between the Admirals at sea and their HQs ashore. At about 1000 Ukan Konga received a particularly vitriolic message from Tokyo. 'Fuzzy's' air recce intermittently caught sight of the Jap combined fleet moving first SW and then NW off the coast of New Georgia, imprudently approaching too close at one stage when two Avengers were downed by Zeros. But where was the Jap air recce?

At about 1400 both admirals received new detailed orders from their HQs. A new Allied Task Force under Vice-Admiral 'Hank' Bloomer had arrived North of the Solomons to operate toward Santa Isabel and the Jap base at Rabaul. The general aim was to outflank the Jap combined fleet, threaten his landings and base and force him to disperse. The Jap orders were designed to protect the carriers and to quickly find and strike the Allied fleet.

Too late! Apart from Ukan Konga obstinately keeping his carriers all together, time had run out for the sons of Nippon. Task Force 44 was launching an air strike on Santa Isabel just as the Japs at last located the Allied main fleet. But as the Japs frantically armed their aircraft for an anti-ship strike, 'Fuzzy' struck first! The inadequate Jap CAP was shot out of the sky and all three carriers were quickly turned into blazing fireballs. By brilliant damage control (dice!) the fires were eventually put out, but the carriers had received heavy damage to their flight decks and were incapable of operating aircraft. Allied aircraft losses were significant, but the Japanese fleet no longer had an air striking force. The Battle of New Georgia was as significant as Midway and marked a turning point in the war.

Later in the afternoon, another air strike on the Japanese combined fleets sank the Cruiser Oyodo. Task force 44 again struck Santa Isobel, and Bloodlust began a bombardment of Milne Bay. During the night the Japs sought 'Fuzzy' in vain (the Allied fleet was retiring South to avoid surface engagements, then TF 21 was heading to support TF44 and Force A to support Force B – see map). By dawn Ukan Konga realised the game was up and began to withdraw, Tokyo cancelled A-Go-Go-VI and the Free World could breathe again. 'Fuzzy' is clearly destined for great things – President ?

As readers will have realised, this was a wargame, organised by Russell Hanson, the narrator, and fought by George Gush and John Hurst, but one which did result in a very Midway-like situation, where the whole result rested on a matter of minutes.

Japanese Forces (BB=battleship; BA=super-battleship;BC=battle cruiser; CA=cruiser,CL=light cruiser; DD=destroyer; CV=carrier; CVL=light carrier;CVE=escort carrier)

Force 1: Invading Milne Bay: 4 CL, 6 DD, convoy.

Force 2: Advancing in Coral Sea under Ukan Konga: BA Yamato, BB Haruna,3 CA, 6 DD

Force 2A: Vanguard to operate ahead of force 2 as a 'bait for enemy airstrikes' and for air recce: CVE Shoho, 1 CL, 4 DD

Force 3: From Rabaul to invade Tulagi (N of Guadalcanal) or a nearer island: 1 CA, 2 CL,6 DD, convoy.

Force 4: To operate N of Solomons; the main carrier force: CVs Akagi & Soryu, 7 DD.

Allied Forces

Task Force 21 under Adml. Dimwitz: BB Tennessee; CV Yorktown, 3 CA, 3 CL, 6 DD

Force A: BB Duke of York; BC Renown; CV Ark Royal; 3 CL; 6 DD

Force B: under Rear-Adml. Bloodlust: 4 CL; 5 DD

Task Force 44 (arriving later): BB South Dakota; CV Saratoga; 1 CA; 3 CL; 6 DD

Allies were essentially given some very vague information about the Jap's possible plans, and told to frustrate whatever they attempted, without losing their carriers !

ENGLISH CHANNEL 1904

By Hugh Munro

On a hazy, balmy day in July 1904 the French and English fleets clashed in the Channel. Could the minor squabbles over fishing rights have come to this ? Neither Admiral cared to think over the causes, but each was determined to defeat the other at sea.

British Fleet:

1st Battleship Squadron (1) Glory (flagship), Canopus (This squadron have crews grade 3, all the rest have crews grade 2)

2nd Battleship Squadron (2) Howe; Benbow; Rodney; Anson

1st Cruiser Squadron (3) Hawke; Edgar; Royal Arthur; Crescent

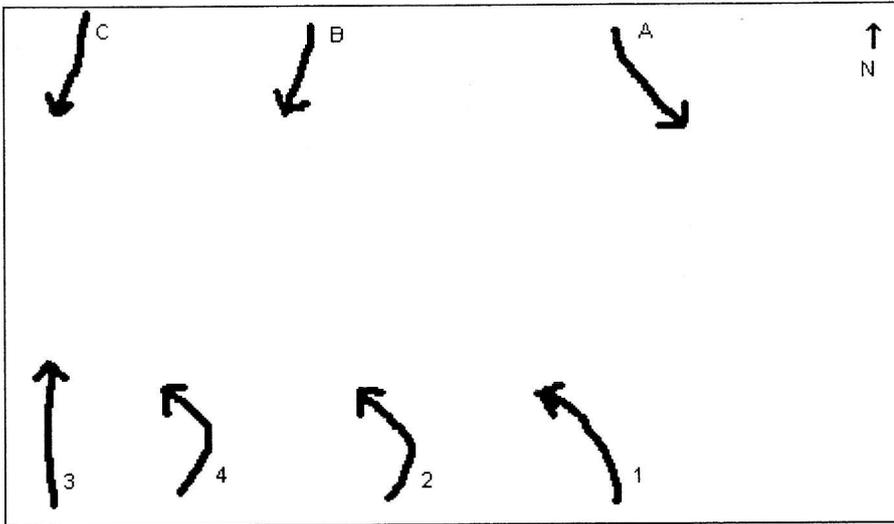
2nd Destroyer Flotilla (4) Ardant; Boxer; Charger; Dasher; Banshee; Dragon

French Fleet:

1st Battleship Squadron (A) Bouvet (flagship), Iena; Jaureguiberry

2nd Battleship Squadron (B) Gaulois; St Louis; Charlemagne (crew 3, other sqdns crew 2)

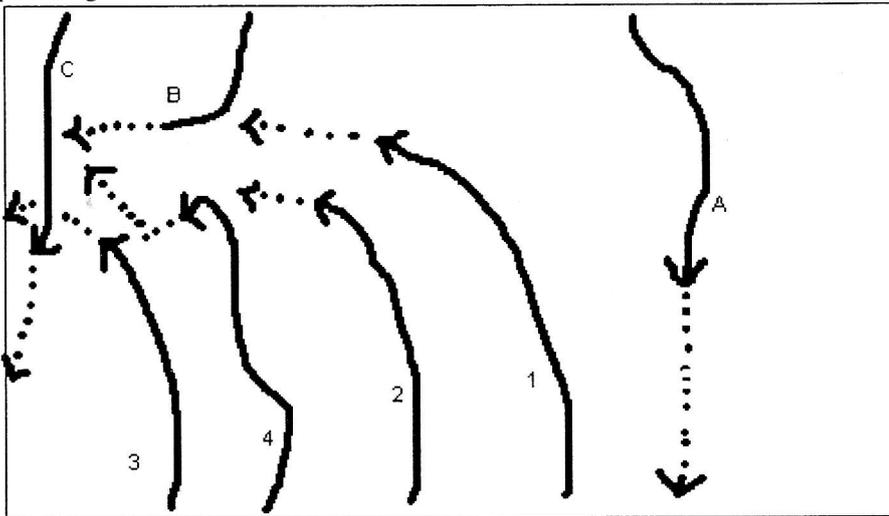
1st Cruiser Squadron (C0) Admiral Charner; Latouche Treville; Chanzy; Bruix



The action started with the British battleships turning to port on sighting the French fleet. The French reacted by veering the Iena squadron (A) away, keeping a long range. The first shots saw the big guns of 2nd BS Squadron (2) hitting Gaulois and Iena. The French return fire saw some close straddles, but no hits.

The two opposing cruiser squadrons closed on each other and swapped hits. Both had to flood magazines to avoid catastrophe. The destroyers (4) raced across the Channel, but were mauled by (B), losing the Ardent. Their Captain decided to withdraw his ships until later in the battle, when the French ships might not have so much fight left in them.

As the battle continued, the Gaulois hit the Howe, which had to flood her forward magazine to avoid an explosion. The Glory and the Canopus continued to fire on (A), causing a couple of fires on Iena and knocking out Jaureguiberry's B turret. As if this was now a turning point, the cruisers moved into short range of each other. The whole British squadron fired on the leading French ship, Admiral Charner, which became a blazing hulk and turned out of line with whatever guns were working still valiantly firing. French return fire was dispersed among the British cruisers, the Hawke taking a pounding.



Then, as the big guns of the Rodney spoke, the St Louis exploded in a great fireball. The battle was definitely turning in favour of the British, and, just to seal the fate of the French, the Bouvet now exploded and sank under fire from Glory and Canopus. French return fire severely damaged the Howe and peppered the glory, but in general the British ships seemed to be soaking up their fire,

Finally, the British cruisers sank the Chanzy and the French cruisers (C) ran South, leaving the blazing Admiral Charner behind. Gaulois and Charlemagne headed West, pursued by destroyers, and Iena and Jaureguiberry fled South, away from the conflict.

The Howe had to undergo emergency repairs, and the Hawke was towed home. A lot of other ships were damaged, but with the loss of only one destroyer against two French battleships and two cruisers, the British retained control of the Channel.

MILITARY QUIZ by Clive McLeod

1. Who commanded Picton's 3rd Division at Salamanca? *Madeira?*
2. Which British tank was produced from 1940 to 1943 despite being condemned as unbattleworthy?
3. Breitenfeld, Bull Run, Alamein, Waterloo, Megiddo. Which is the odd one out, and why?
4. In WW2 American fighters had their type number prefixed by 'P' (eg: P51). What did P stand for? *pursuit*
5. Who commanded the allied army that relieved Vienna in 1683?
6. Which country fought against Britain, France and the Netherlands in the early 18th Century 'War of the Quadruple Alliance'?
7. Who is said to have won a decisive victory at Badon Hill? *Arthur*
8. Which English county regiment was nicknamed the 'dirty half-hundred'?
9. Which battle is said to be the only one fought on Australian soil?
10. What was Francis Drake's flagship during the Armada campaign? *Malta*
11. Which island was awarded the George Cross during WW2?
12. Where did Alexander the Great fight his second battle against Darius?
13. Which aggressive American admiral was lured away from his proper position at Leyte Gulf?
14. Which German commander recaptured Kharkov in early 1943?
15. Which Spanish general defeated Marshal Soult at San Marcial in 1813?
16. Which conqueror defeated the Ottoman Turks at Ankara in 1405?
17. Which unorthodox British officer formed the Chindits in 1942? *Wingate*
18. Who commanded the Vietnamese forces at Dien Bien Phu? *Giap*
19. How many men were made Marshals of France by Napoleon I?
20. Against which opponent did Alexander Nevsky win his nickname of 'Nevsky'?
21. Who commanded the defeated Royalist army at Cheriton during the English Civil War?
22. What was the standard tank machine gun used by the British for most of WW2? *Besa*
23. Which city state rose to control the Eastern Roman Empire till defeated by Aurelian in 272AD?
24. In the American Civil War, what was an Agar?
25. Where did the Prussian Guard lose 8000 men in 20 minutes in 1870?
26. Where did James IV of Scotland meet his death in 1513? *Flodden?*
27. What was unusual about the 'secret' howitzers introduced by Petr Shuvalov to the 18th Century Russian army?
28. What do the initials APCBC stand for? *Armour piercing capped ballistics capped.*
29. Which king won a victory at Clontarf in 1014AD, but was killed in the battle?
30. Who commanded the English forces at Poitiers?
31. Whose Red Shirts toppled the Bourbon kingdom of Naples in 1860? *Cavour*
32. Who invented the suspension system used in many British cruiser tanks, and in Russian BT tanks? *Christie*
33. By what name is the 12th Century battle of Northallerton better known?
34. Who commanded the Union army that defeated Hood at Nashville in 1864?
35. Which day was described as the Black day of the German army? *— ? August 1918*
36. Who was the highest scoring Commonwealth fighter pilot of WW2?
37. Who defeated the Caledones at Mons Graupius in 84AD?
38. Who was known as El Gran Capitan?
39. What was the first of the three battles fought in England in 1066?
40. Where did the UN forces make a daring amphibious landing in 1950, during the Korean War? *Inchon*

I hope Clive will provide answers for a later issue.

REVIEWS

In this section you can help other club members by writing a few words on wargame-related products that you have tried. These could include figures, paints, scenic items, materials, rules, books, board or computer games. Even a very brief comment can be useful to someone wondering whether or what to buy.

House of Campaign British Infantry WWII: 1:76: one of the now-common firms reissuing plastic figures. This set, though illustrated and described with Bren, tommy gun and Lee-Enfield rifle on the box, are NOT WW2 Tommies but the old Airfix British infantry who are post-war, with later helmet and SLR automatic rifles, and are NO use for WW2. Don't be fooled as I was. (George Gush)