



Colorado Military Historians

Newsletter

XLV, No. 6

June 2019



Google Street Views of Normandy American Cemetery and Omaha Beach

Back in the Saddle

Message from CMH Secretary

Eric Elder

It looks like I am back as club Secretary after a seven year break. Previously I was club Secretary from 2005 to 2012. I am glad to be back on the Board in a very vibrant club. I am impressed at our monthly attendance and at our club conventions. Lots of old and new faces.

We had our annual Board elections at our West Wars convention May 19. I was the only new incoming member. All previous member have stayed in their same positions as last year.

I pulled up the last newsletter I did for June 2012 and discovered that David Newport was the contributor for content that month. Well...he is back again with another submission. This time David has shared his Night Action naval game rules. Having just played the rules, I found them fast and fun to play.

This month on June 6, we have the 75th anniversary of DDay. I've interspersed various images from that day throughout the newsletter. The invasion was pretty impressive and deserves remembrance, but the rest of the Normandy campaign is often overlooked. I wish the media would do a follow-up after the DDay remembrance and talk about the Normandy campaign. Although, maybe we/I could do something, like write an article. I'm sure some of us have read a lot more about the Normandy campaign, and I certainly enjoyed reading two books on the Canadians in Normandy after DDay.



Two U.S. paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division trot northward on the Rue du Cap de Laine in Sainte-Mere Eglise on June 7, 1944. After being misdropped on DDay, they commandeered horses to get them to their assigned assembly point. Photo from National Archives.

May Monthly Meeting

Unit of the Month

Temporarily no sponsor

Each month CMH members bring their latest painted figures and models to the meeting to display their latest efforts.

CMH Member	Scale	Manufacturer	Era	Unit
Eric Elder	1:600	Tumbling Dice	WWII	Ju88
Dave Manley	15mm	Home made	WWII	Foxholes
Dave Manley	15mm	Battlefront	WWII	Infantry, 50mm guns, 88mm guns
Terry Shockey	28mm	Knuckleduster	Western	Western Outlaws
Terry Shockey	15mm	Blue Moon	Ancient	Mid-Imperial Romans (Western)
Bill Daniel	15mm	Hordes	Fantasy	Elf Camp



Armoured vehicles moving inland from SWORD Beach on D-Day. Elements of an engineer unit are visible in the column of vehicles just leaving the beach, while further ahead are several M4 Sherman tanks, some towing ammunition trailers. In the field to the west of the column, a battery of self-propelled artillery has deployed, ready for action, while a combat bridge has been dumped next to the road south.

NIGHT ACTION

David Newport

4/26/2019

Turn Sequence

1. Players pick maneuver cards and torpedo fire cards, then simultaneously reveal them.
2. Maneuver orders are checked for implementation, and then all ships are moved.
3. Combat phase. Torpedo and gun fire is resolved.

Maneuvers and Movement

Players are commanders of task forces of ships. They control these formations by issuing orders in the form of maneuver cards. The whole task force will then execute the maneuvers.

- The task force will pick a speed at the start of the turn that is not faster than the slowest ship.
- Speeds are listed in increments of 3" (about 6 knots).
- Ships should move in a line, with 1-2" inches between ships.
- Ships dropped from the formation due to a lack of speed will turn for their table edge and try to disengage.
- Maneuver cards are straight and then Port and Starboard turns of 30, 60, 90, 120, 150 and 180 degrees.
- Formations may turn within 10 degrees of the card, i.e. a turn to Port of 60 degrees can be a Port 50-70.
The idea is to select a direction and move, not get picky about the exact degree.
- Ships follow in a line ahead and turn in the same location (turn in succession.) You can choose where to initiate the turn. If the formation has not completed the turn, they keep the same card next time!
- No turn gages are provided. Just make the turn. For turns over 60 degrees, subtract 3" of movement.

After all players have selected cards for their formations, the cards are revealed. Now each formation rolls a d6:

Die Roll	Result
3-6	Maneuver is executed as ordered.
2	Execute maneuver for turns of 30-60 degrees. Turns of 90+ degrees convert to a STRAIGHT.
1	Ships execute a STRAIGHT, regardless of the order.

This represents orders not received, not executed right or on time, garbled orders, etc.

Combat Phase

Once all the ships have moved, combat occurs. Check the following table to find out how many dice each ship rolls when firing guns. Torpedo loads are limited to one shot, check them off when they are fired.

Torpedoes **must** be fired if you selected a 'Torpedoes Yes' card at the start of the turn.

Combat is simultaneous, every ship will get to fire. Select targets however you want.

Ship class	Combat dice	
Battleships	6d12	Maximum range is 48"
Cruisers	5d8	Range is over 20": -1 die (not torpedoes)
Light cruisers	5d6	Target speed 9" or less: +1 die
Destroyers	4d6	Target on fire: +1 die
US Torpedoes	3d10	You are on fire: -1 die
Japanese Torpedoes	3d12	Modifiers per the maneuver cards: use them, they drive the game
		Combat dice represent main armament. If in the forward or aft quarter of the ship, lose one die.

Ships block LOS and is traced in a straight line from ship to ship. You must have a clear LOS.

Pick a target, roll your dice. No splitting of fire between multiple targets allowed. **All rolls of 5+ hit.**

Hits roll again using the same size die on this table:

Die roll	Results
1	No effect
2	No effect
3	No effect
4	1 hit
5	1 hit
6	2 hits
7	2 hits
8	3 hits
9	3 hits
10+	4 hits

Each hit should be marked off the ship. When you are out of boxes you sink!

Battleships reduce all hits by one, except hits from torpedoes

Critical hits. This is handled by differently colored dice. Roll one of each color when taking a shot to get a crit. If it hits, see the table below

Not enough dice to get every color? Choose colors to leave out.

Die color	Hits from this die cause:
Red	Ship is on fire! +1 die when fired at, -1 die when it fires
Black	Ship loses 50% of its speed. Two black hits: dead in the water.
Green	Control hit (bridge, rudder, comms, etc.) Repeat maneuver card.

Sample Ship Sheet

							Torpedo	Notes
CA								
							0	
CA								
							0	
CL								
							0	
CL								
							0	
CL								
							0	
DD								
							0	
DD								
							0	

STRAIGHT <div> <div>Guns</div> <div>Torpedoes</div> </div> <div> You - - Opponent - - </div>	PORT 30 <div> <div>Guns</div> <div>Torpedoes</div> </div> <div> You -1 die -1 die Opponent -1 die -1 die </div>	STARBOARD 30 <div> <div>Guns</div> <div>Torpedoes</div> </div> <div> You -1 die -1 die Opponent -1 die -1 die </div>
PORT 60 <div> <div>Guns</div> <div>Torpedoes</div> </div> <div> You -2 die No Opponent -1 die -2 die </div>	STARBOARD 60 <div> <div>Guns</div> <div>Torpedoes</div> </div> <div> You -2 die No Opponent -1 die -2 die </div>	PORT 90 <div> <div>Guns</div> <div>Torpedoes</div> </div> <div> You -2 die No Opponent -2 die Miss </div>
STARBOARD 90 <div> <div>Guns</div> <div>Torpedoes</div> </div> <div> You -2 die No Opponent -2 die Miss </div>	PORT 120 <div> <div>Guns</div> <div>Torpedoes</div> </div> <div> You -3 die No Opponent -2 die Miss </div>	STARBOARD 120 <div> <div>Guns</div> <div>Torpedoes</div> </div> <div> You -3 die No Opponent -2 die Miss </div>
PORT 150 <div> <div>Guns</div> <div>Torpedoes</div> </div> <div> You -3 die No Opponent -2 die Miss </div>	STARBOARD 150 <div> <div>Guns</div> <div>Torpedoes</div> </div> <div> You -3 die No Opponent -2 die Miss </div>	PORT 180 <div> <div>Guns</div> <div>Torpedoes</div> </div> <div> You -3 die No Opponent -2 die Miss </div>
STARBOARD 180 <div> <div>Guns</div> <div>Torpedoes</div> </div> <div> You -3 die No Opponent -2 die Miss </div>	TORPEDOES NO	TORPEDOES YES

Large Caliber, Point Blank, High Velocity, Ship-Gutting Rampage

Or why I thought we needed a new naval game

Designer Notes By David Newport

Thanks to all those gamers who tried out my naval game titled *Night Action* at the Westwars club event. Hopefully everyone had a good time. Following are a few notes on why I designed it and what choices I made while doing so. There are a number of things that I felt the need to portray and put in my own game, so herein is a list of them with some discussion. You may or may not agree with what I'm trying to accomplish with my own rules, but perhaps you can get some insight into the design process of an apparently simple game and perhaps look at your own games a little differently.

Night Action is focused on the scrappy naval battles off Guadalcanal in late 1942. While occasionally battleships made their appearance, most of the battles featured cruisers and destroyers going at it at short range. The average engagement started at about 5,000 yards, with the longest just over 8,000 yards and the shortest at 3,000 yards (and that was with a battleship!) Sheer panic and chaos ensued, and I had to capture that. So not only is it a very interesting topic to me, but it allowed me to make some design choices focused just on the chaos and carnage of the night surface battles.

But first, why make a new naval game at all? Obviously, I'm the guy at the club who is always making up his own rules, so it's no surprise that when I want a naval game I put my own stamp on it. As a former Navy officer, I am usually up for trying a naval game. I must say that Doug Wildfong's sailing ship games are great and hit all my buttons, but I always find myself feeling something is amiss when I try out 20th century naval games. After some thought it came to me that my perspective was of the guy on the bridge giving orders to drive the action, not the staff looking at an after-action report. My game had to focus on what you would perceive from the bridge and what orders you would give, and everything had to facilitate that in my usual one page rules format.

What do you get in a typical 20th century naval game (and what did I want to mess with)? In no particular order, there is ship speed and turn plotting, turn gauges, a lack of major maneuvers, torpedoes running across the map over multiple turns, very extensive damage charts with multiple die rolls and a host of modifiers, and tracking the minutia of ship damage. All of this proceeds at a stately pace. This isn't bad and indeed allows for gamers to explore a simulation or a pseudo-history of a naval action. But it doesn't match my design goals at all.

Speed of play: if you read about many naval battles, you will find that the actual action took place in an hour or two. In fact, in my *Night Action* time frame, the battles were over in about 50 minutes from first detection to disengagement. Imagine two fleets steaming at each other at a combined speed of nearly 70 miles per hour, with intense, large caliber, point blank, high velocity, ship gutting rampage following immediately. Me, I want this to happen fast with major results, yet most naval games I've played will resolve that game over a course of about 4-5 hours and often be called for time. Nope, the game had to play in real time or close to it. Those who played *Night Action* will recall that we finished two games and could easily have worked in three battles in the four hour time slot. The following decisions ensured that.

Plotting course and speed and using turn gauges: This is very much a feature of most games, and it makes sense in that ships are always moving, there is not a lot of move/countermove that would lend itself to alternating moves where you take turns. It's 2D vector movement, basically. Works for me, but I find that after doing it for real for years I look at the table, taking in relative position, range, sensors, weapons arcs, speed, etc., I make a decision as to where to move my ships in about 5 seconds and I'm ready to move. Performing all the plotting and turn gauges and all is just a drag on me selecting a vector and throwing my ships (moving at 30 knots!) where I want them. In real life at that speed you make the call and it happens fast! I wanted to capture that snap decision making the officer of the deck is performing, not get bogged down in the accuracy of what exactly the ships are doing each increment of their move.

Thus I came up with the maneuver cards for *Night Action*. The idea is that out of a set of cards with turns in increments of 30 degrees, you must select a card, put it down near your ships, and that is your maneuver for the coming game turn. You make that decision a ship driver is making, i.e. where do I put my ship to better develop the tactical situation, and you throw it down and execute it. Pick a direction and go. No turn gauges, as with smaller ships moving at flank speed it's just not that important as they'll come about really fast and it just bogs the game down. Now, if you put the helm hard over at flank speed you will lose speed, so I say you move 3" less that game turn, but otherwise that's it. I also build into the game that you want to move as fast as possible, which is what was done in a night surface battle. How? First off, if you aren't going 20+ knots, other ships get a bonus to fire at you as their fire control solution is much easier. Also, I make you repeat your maneuver next turn if you aren't finished and gamers rapidly realize that the ability to maneuver and quickly change position is critical to success so they keep the speed high to get through their current maneuver in order to start the next one as soon as possible.

What about screw ups? Any reading of a surface night action reveals mass confusion only barely moderated by standard operating procedures. It seems the Japanese were slightly better at it and had trained harder, but they too had major lapses. In *Night Action* you roll a die and on a one the maneuver becomes a straight move, and for major maneuvers of turning 90 degrees or more that roll is a one or a two. By the time the admiral or senior captain made his decision, got the order issued, acknowledged, and then implemented, all with guns firing, flares, flashes, searchlights, garbled reports and screwed up comms, damage reports, spotting reports, and all the chaos that happens on the bridge in action, it's easy to see why a maneuver may take an extra turn to actually execute. Players were quick to note that that maneuver die roll could cause problems, and yes in real life things didn't happen perfectly.

Damage: Most 20th century games get involved in the minutia of tracking damage and the fall of shot. Really, if you read many detailed histories you will find that the *Inedible* fired a 12" shell at the *Schweinfloetter* and it impacted at this angle on this compartment and did this damage. Yes, it did, and it's a naval geek's dream to read all about this. Yet if you are driving the ship, what do you really care about? What did that hit do? Did it affect speed (did you lose a fire room or an engine room)? Can you still maneuver (rudder is jammed, helmsman dead, comms out, the bridge is out of action and they need to switch to a different control station)? Are they on fire? Did you lose a turret? Is she sinking? Is it just a hit and damage control parties are on it? And in all this your batteries are firing like mad and it's loud and bright and chaotic, it's going fast and you still have a ship to drive. Thus I came up with the whole damage routine. And yes, it has to fit on one page, that's the way I write rules.

First off, each ship fires a certain number of dice. Cruisers get five eight siders, light cruisers five six siders, and destroyers have four six siders. The number to hit is a 5+. Cruisers with 8" guns will do more damage and be more likely to hit than the lighter ships. Now, they may all get the same number of hits,

but the heavier rounds are more likely to have an impact so that is built in to the dice. Also, if you read the history there are not actually that many hits, which is why we can geek out over each one of them, so this fast fist full of dice gets the job done handsomely, so you get the firing done rapidly to move quickly on with the game.

What about special damage? I boil this down to three effects: movement, control, and fire, which is about all you care about in the 30 minutes of action your ships face. Each of these gets a die color, black, green, and red respectively. If that color of die hits and does damage, the target suffers that effect. Half movement, repeating the maneuver card next turn, or being easier to hit (and also losing a die in combat, effectively building a firepower reduction hit in with the fire roll). All other hits are generic flotation hits which eventually and probably rapidly lead to sinking. The effects you would notice from the bridge are built into a quick die roll rather than damage tables and critical hits and the like. This also allows every shot to have some chance of success, as that destroyer down to one die roll has a chance of taking out the boilers or starting a fire on a heavy cruiser. You can't discount any ship on the table, they can all hurt you.

Maneuver: Many naval games have very little maneuver. If you have battlewagons engaging in a line of battle, perhaps that's okay but it's not exciting, and it's certainly not going to fly when the enemy is a heavy cruiser 4,000 yards off and she's going 30 knots and your batteries are masked and someone may be about to launch torpedoes at you and there's guns firing everywhere you can see! Partly this is built into the cards and the scenarios I run. But it had to have more of an effect, and I tied it right to the cards.

I recall reading about the Battle of the River Platte. *Ajax*, a light cruiser fighting *Graf Spee*, would steer into *Graf Spee*'s shell splashes, her captain reasoning that if the Germans saw their shells fire short they would fire longer on the next salvo. Thus if she shortened the range, she wouldn't get hit and the next salvo would fire over her. It worked. It also threw off *Ajax*'s own aim, so that *Ajax* both took less damage than the other two British ships but she also got very few hits on *Graf Spee*. This is one controlled, daylight example, but you read about it all the time, especially in the short range melee off Guadalcanal at night. Further, any time you read about ships that know torpedoes are in the water or might be soon, they will maneuver violently to try to avoid a hit.

Thus the maneuver cards also have a die modifier on them. If you maneuver, you reduce your own dice. You also reduce the number of dice thrown at you. Slight maneuvers only cost you one die, but violent maneuvers can lose up to three dice as the batteries get masked, the guns have to track an enormous amount, and the targeting gets obscenely difficult. Remember even heavy cruisers only have five dice, so this is a major impact to your firing. Maneuver is a major concern in that situation when the enemy is 4,000 yards off and you don't want an 8" shell or torpedo to hit, and I put it right there on the cards for you to contemplate and for all to see. There is a real reason to maneuver in *Night Action* and it has major consequences in combat, all while being really easy to track and calculate for that all-important speed of play.

Other modifiers: I keep modifiers to a minimum to make it easy to handle and quick to calculate. Plus it aids with speed of play. I only change the number of dice rolled and keep the basic 5+ to hit, all to speed up play. The only mods are ones you can control and see directly from the bridge. Is the main armament masked? Lose a die. Is the range over 20"? Lose a die. If that seems short, recall the chaos and night conditions, and my modifier may be generous. Is the target slow or on fire? Gain a die. This is easy to process and moves the game along.

Torpedoes. In a short range action you have to deal with torpedoes, and in fact the famous Japanese Long Lance torpedo was devastating against US ships until they learned how to fight back. But what is my take on them? First off, torpedoes should be units of ordinance that are fired, not something that stays on the map. You set up the shot, fire, and it hits or it does not. While getting hit by a weapon that was fired from epic range and stumbled into a ship did happen, it's not likely and it's not what I want players to focus on. Besides, at night and at short range you won't see them once they are expended.



Ships of Task Force 18 shelling Japanese facilities on Kolombangara and New Georgia on 13 May 1943 as seen from USS Nicholas.

May Monthly Meeting

Game of the Month

Sponsored by Total Escape Games

Each month CMH members host games at the monthly meeting. This award is for the effort put out by the host.

CMH Member	Scale	Rules	Description
John Brown Terry Shockey	15mm	Hotts	Hotts Tournament
John Owen	1:2400	Home Grown	WWI Convoy Action
JEFF LAMBERT	25mm	TSATF	Relief of Chamla
David Newport	15mm	Tactical Combat	Battle of the Bulge

Winner in **RED**



Elements of 4/7 Dragoon Guards coming ashore on Gold Beach. Five amphibious Duplex-Drive Sherman tanks are visible in the image, along with a Sherman Flail mine-clearing tank and an armoured bulldozer, used to clear beach obstacles and construct exit ramps off the beach. Smoke is rising from burning gorse bushes, set ablaze as troops fight their way ashore.

Historic Location of the Month



Longue Battery in Normandy (photo from trip in 1990)



August 2018 Google Street View

CMH June Scheduled Events

This table shows what scheduled CMH events are coming up. Next months Friday Night Fights (FNF) and the monthly meeting (MM) are listed. West Wars (WW) 2012 is this month. It is recommended to schedule your game for future meetings and will appear on this page.

Date	Meeting	Location	Start Time	End Time
June 7	FNF	Total Escape	7:00 pm	10:00 pm
June 9	MM	Baker	12:00 pm	5:00 pm
June 14	FNF	Total Escape	7:00 pm	10:00 pm
June 21	FNF	Total Escape	7:00 pm	10:00 pm
June 28	FNF	Total Escape	7:00 pm	10:00 pm

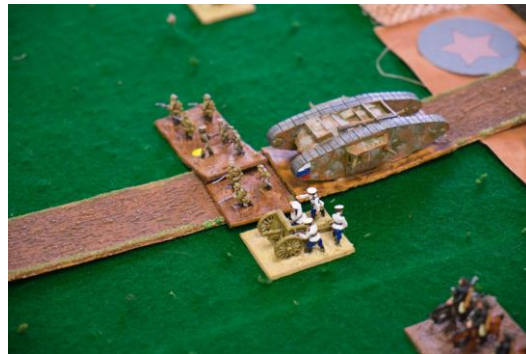


NCAP

Supplied for licensed use only by HES-NCAP
ncap.org.uk/NCAP-000-000-023-208

Bulldozers and tanks fitted with blades carried out important work at OMAHA, in clearing paths through concrete obstacles, wire and shingle for tanks and troops to advance off the beach. At upper left in this image, one such vehicle can be seen to have cut a route through the sea wall and has reversed before making another attempt.

West Wars Photos



Colorado Military Historians, Inc.

Colorado Military Historians (CMH) is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to promote historical wargaming and the study of military history. Founded in 1965, CMH meets monthly on the second Sunday of the month, except in May when the meeting is deferred to the third Sunday. The meeting starts at noon at the Baker Recreation Center, 6751 Irving Street (just a few blocks west of Federal Blvd), Denver, Colorado. The club also hosts gaming at least one Friday night a month, called "Friday Night Fights" (FNF) at 7:00 p.m. One Friday of the month will be held at the Baker Community Center. The other Friday meetings will be held at a future determined location. See website for latest information.



CMH maintains ties with numerous local, regional and national groups to help promote the hobby. CMH is governed by member-elected officers serving on the Board of Directors (executive board). Terms of office are one year, with elections held at the May meeting. New members are accepted after attending three CMH functions and a vote of the membership. Dues are \$50.00 per year, payable in January. Members wishing to receive a snail-mailed newsletter subscription must pay an additional fee of \$15.00 per year. Authors retain ownership of articles and graphics published. CMH reserves the right to edit or reject submissions to the newsletter.

One year Adult Membership: \$50.00

Half year Adult Membership: \$25.00

(For NEW members who join after June 30)

Family Membership: \$50.00 (one Adult and any number of offspring)

Student Membership: \$25.00 (16 to 22 years old)

Children: free (younger than 16 accompanied by member)

CMH Newsletter

The CMH Newsletter is a monthly newsletter published by the Colorado Military Historians. Views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of all CMH members.

Mailing Address:

Eric Elder
9529 Castle Ridge Cir.
Highlands Ranch, CO 80129

Phone: 303-933-4723

Email: eejist@hotmail.com

Web Site: www.cmhweb.org

Editor/Layout: Eric Elder

Next Issue: July 2019

2019/2020 CMH Board Members

President:

Nate Forte
natforteg1@gmail.com

Vice-President

Jim Rairdon
airdon8071@comcast.net

Secretary

Eric Elder
eejist@hotmail.com
303-933-4723

Treasurer

Larry Irons

Historian

Doug Wildfong
dwwild84@gmail.com