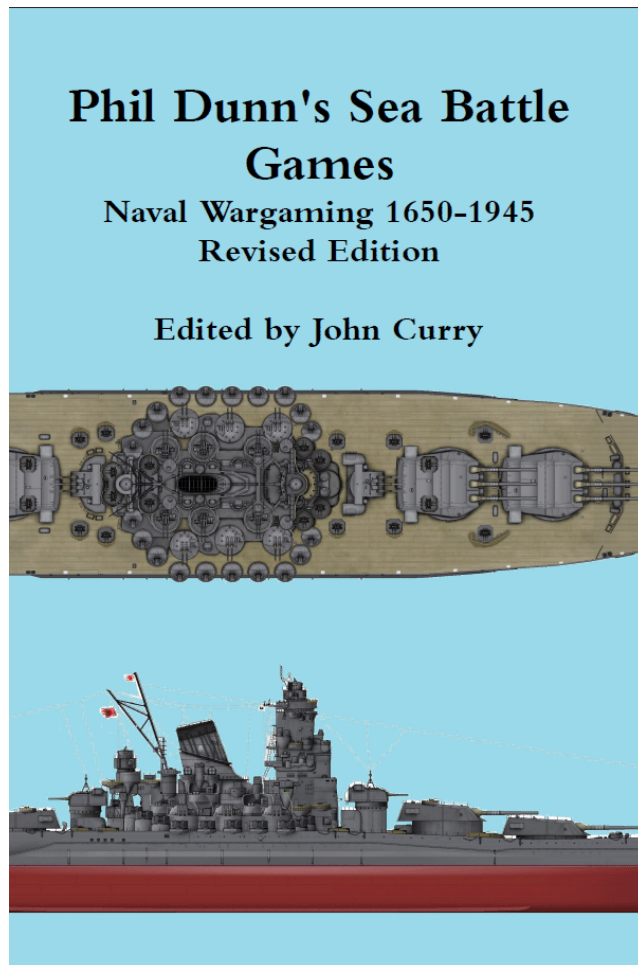


***Sea Battle Games: Naval Wargaming 1650–1945 Revised Edition***  
**by Phil Dunn**  
**Review by Paul Le Long**

*Sea Battle Games* by Phil Dunn originally came out in 1970. This new edition – part of John Curry’s History of Wargaming Project – contains the original book plus a new introduction by Phil Dunn, as well as updated appendices covering things like books, ships, rules and manufacturers as well as an interesting Hunt the Bismark game by Paddy Griffith.



The book kicks off with an interesting discussion of the history of naval wargaming, Chapter Two is a wider discussion of the subject of naval wargames in general. Then we have a chapter on figure manufacturers before we get to the rules which form the core of the book. The focus is very much on the big-gun battleship type of game – dreadnoughts to WWII for the most part. However, the author starts with a set of Napoleonic rules, which he says can be used for anything from 1650-1840. Actually, there are two versions, one for large fleet actions and a more detailed set for smaller actions. Later on, he provides a chapter on “Battlegaming in Early Periods,” which actually only starts in 1470 and covers the Armada and Anglo-Dutch Wars periods mainly. There are a few rules suggestions here and an interesting discussion of the period.

But it is clear that the author is far more interested in more modern naval warfare. So we have chapters on Ironclad Period Rules (1860-70), a Dreadnought Gunnery System, World War II Fighting Rules, Monster Guns,

and a World War I gunnery system. There are two chapters on campaign games, both with WWII in mind – one is a discussion of map campaigns and the other is a “Hypothetical World War Game,” which provides fascinating ideas on using naval power in a historical way – blockading ports, disrupting industry and generally controlling the sea. This section could almost have been written by Corbett or Mahan and is one of the highlights of the book because it sets naval operations in the very widest context: Naval power is strategic in essence, the tactical aspects are secondary. There is also a chapter with very innovative rules (again with a modern slant) which use darts and dartboard to calculate gunnery accuracy.



**Figure 1 HMS Dreadnought**

This book runs to over 250 pages and is really packed with ideas. There is a very definite emphasis on the post-1860 period, so anyone fond of earlier periods will find less to interest them here, though there are still good ideas that can be adapted, I'm sure. To be honest I'm not the biggest fan of big-gun battleship naval games and the author's rules are not generally my thing either – a bit complicated and “old-school” for my taste. That said, I would still recommend the book as it full of interesting ideas, suggestions and discussions, some of which really are innovative. If you are a devotee of the dreadnought or want to fight Jutland or Tsushima then you must buy this book.

Details:

- ☐ **Paperback:** 266 pages
- ☐ **Publisher:** lulu.com (12 July 2010)
- ☐ **ISBN-10:** 1445742977
- ☐ **ISBN-13:** 978-1445742977

This is a John Curry reprint which is currently selling for £13.46 and US\$21.54. The original is out of print but surfaces on Amazon & eBay regularly.