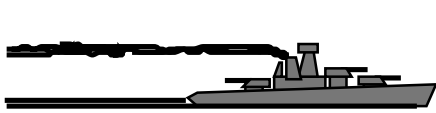


TASK FORCE 144



The Official Newsletter of Model Warship Combat, Inc.

www.mwci.org

Fall (Nats) -2002



CALENDAR OF MWC EVENTS

October 5-6

Fray at Bray's

Siloam Springs, AR

\$4, CO2, Pop -- Sanctioned

Contact: Kevin Bray, 479-871-5162

brayka@cox-internet.com

Holiday Inn Express 479-524-8080

Nov. 30-Dec. 1

Trotwood Turkey Shoot

Winter Springs, FL

Contact: Rick King (see BOD page)

December 7

Pearl Harbor Memorial

Garland, TX

No Fee, Bring your own CO2

Non-Sanctioned

Contact: Steve Reichenbach

wtpat2@yahoo.com

972-668-2449

July 13-18, 2003

MWC National Championship

Perry, Georgia

\$???, CO2, Ice, and Brunch provided
Sanctioned

Contact: Joel Goodman,

678-355-5356

Quality Inn, Perry

478-987-1345, ask for Peggy

BOD Doin's:

In an effort to help out the new battlers out there, the BOD voted to allow **NEW** members who join after the date of Nats to do so for half price. This is to make it easier for them to take part in late season battles for those that finish their boats in the last half of the year.



Sayeth the North Carolina: "Butt-Butt-Butt-Butt I want to play too!"

Photo by Mike Melton's brother

Nats 2002

BBs, Balsa, and Silk span:

A Rookie's Tale

(Or, How to keep your father busy
on his vacation)

By Joshua Bruder



Preparing for Nats was a nightmare. First there was resheeting all three of the family's ships. Then there was making sure that every part in every boat worked properly. Then there was this whole moving thing. After we moved from Tampa, Florida to Colorado, we had to recheck every boat to make sure nothing had broken. Then after a short week in our new home, we started packing for Nats.

Friday

We woke up Friday morning anticipating the trip ahead. We had

packed all the boats and supplies the night before. We ate breakfast and did some last minute checks on the boats. After saying good-bye, we shoved off for Nats. The trip was long and uneventful. We stopped for the night outside of Wichita Falls in Texas. We all went to sleep dreaming of the week to come.

Saturday

We woke up the next morning looking forward to a short trip. We packed up and headed out. After about five hours we arrived at the Holiday Inn that was housing Nats battlers this year. As we were unpacking our boats and equipment, we met Chris Grossaint, another battler from Colorado. We talked about looking forward to battling in Colorado. After that we settled into our room. We were supposed to meet with Steve Reichenbach for dinner around six, so we had plenty of time to relax and meet battlers as they came by our room. Around five



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our friends from Florida rolled in. We sat down and talked about the week ahead just before the sky opened up and drenched the area with inches of rain.

Six o'clock rolled around and we all left for Steve's room to meet for dinner. There Steve gave us directions to a Chinese buffet, Tung's. Rick King and Don Cole came with us to the restaurant. There Rick introduced us to The Great Fluegal. For months I had anticipated finally meeting Herr Fluegal, and now here he was shaking hands with me. I was so thrilled. Again I was honored when Fluegal and Bryan Finster sat with us at dinner. It was a night I would never forget. After dinner we came back to the hotel and talked about all the people we had met and all the new ships we would see. We hit the sack about 10:30. The week was already going great.

Sunday

We got up around eight after a good night's sleep. We got some breakfast and setup to do some final touchups on the boats. After breakfast, we went down to the Stephens' room to chat and look at their huge Yamatos. After a while my brother and I started to get

the conference rooms. Charley Stephens called the meeting to order soon after we came in. All the items on the agenda were covered and every one got up to head to the lake for testing. On the way out I got the T-shirts from Ted Brogden. We got back to the room and packed up.

We got to the lake just as the first people there were unpacking. There were three lakes and two bridges. We could battle on two lakes and under the bridge that connected them. The third lake was on the other side of a very low bridge. Any ship that went under the low bridge would be declared sunk. We unpacked and got our test forms from Steve Reichenbach. While my dad was speed testing my brothers VDT and his Zara, I asked Joel Goodman if he would make sure my ship was legal. I told him that my boat, along with my dad and brother's, had been drop tested already by Jim Coler. He asked to see the patches and I showed him. After a few minutes he told me that all I needed was to speed test, be weighed, and have my pressure checked. I thanked him and went looking for my dad.

As I was walking along the speed course, I heard a cheer. I went over to Tony Stephens and asked



Former Teammates, now opponents, but still comrades. Fluegel puts folks at ease, including rookie Peter Kunisch, who felt much better after Fluegel told him, "I'd rather lose with you than win without you."

Photo by Georgi Kunisch

hungry, so we all loaded up and went to a nearby McDonalds to get some lunch.

Shortly after lunch we went to the Captain's Meeting in one of

what was happening. "A Houston went down," he told me. "Where," I asked. He pointed to a spot where a few bubbles were rising in the water.

“Oohhh” I said as I walked off to find out where to get my regulator pressure tested.

After a few minutes I found what I was looking for. I asked an Allied captain, I can’t remember who, to test my regulator. Then my dad walked to me and told me to get my boat ready for speed testing. When I got my regulator back, I weighed the Lutzow and it turned out I had about half a pound to spare. After weighing in, I took my boat over to the pond for speed testing. As I was lining up to speed test a VDT, I don’t know whose, plowed right into me. I brought my boat in and it turned out I had ram damage. I took my boat back to the bench and patched the hole in the side of my ship.

While I was letting the patch dry, I went over to Doug Hunt, who was launching his Houston. I asked him if it was the Houston that had sunk earlier, and he told me yes. I wished him the best of luck and watched him launch. Immediately I noticed that his ship had a list to its starboard side. I told him this and as he was bringing his boat in, it sank a second time. I helped him bring his boat out of the water and asked him if his pump was on. He said that it was and yet there was no stream coming from his pump outlet. This was strange so I went with him to his bench and tried to help him find out what was wrong with his boat. He had no holes in his ship and I could not find a ram crack in his ship either. I told him that this was very strange and asked a friend to see if he could help him.

Afterwards, I went and speed tested my own ship. It passed on its first try. Seeing that my dad and brother still had to pass some more test, I went and looked around at all the ships in the pavilion. Then I went lakeside to see all the ships doing their speed trails. Then I heard “Man in the Water.” I looked to my right and saw Doug Hunt wading into the water. I shook my head. I

felt sorry for Doug. Sinking three times during speed trials.

After he had recovered his boat, I went to see if I could help. Upon closer investigation, I found that the balsa had split where two of the pieces met at a rib. I showed them to him and another Allied captain nearby. I left to let the more experienced captain help Doug. As I was looking at boats my dad walked up and asked if I was ready to leave. I told him yes and we started to pack up. We left shortly after and came back to the hotel. We ate dinner with Peter Kunisch and his wife at the hotel restaurant.

After dinner we went directly to the Axis meeting. There Charley discussed strategies and divided up his fleets. He put us into flotillas and appointed me commander of the cruiser flotilla. After breaking us into our separate fleets, Charley told each flotilla commander what his flotilla was supposed to do in the upcoming battle. After the meeting we went back to our room and went to bed around 10:30.

Monday

Monday morning we got up early and started packing the boats into the van. When we arrived at the pond it was raining very heavily. We setup and prepared for the morning’s first battle. The first sortie was postponed until 10:00. While I was waiting I looked around. I talked with Bob Hoernaman about cruisers and gun placement on a cruiser. Finally the CD called for us to put the boats on the water.

Fleet Battle #1

Axis A vs. Allied A, First Sortie

The Allied A fleet was composed of: Doug Hunt (Houston), Bob Hoernaman (Minneapolis), Jim Coler (North Carolina), Kevin Bray (Massachusetts), Brain Lamb

(Dupleix), Chris Grossaint (Washington), Joel Goodman (Indiana), Matthew Clarke (Louisville), Dana Graham (Prince of Wales), Tim Beckett (North Carolina), and Steve Reichenbach (Alabama). That’s eleven captains, seven with 6 unit battleships and four with 3 unit cruisers, for a total of 54 units.

The Axis A fleet was composed of: Noel Cook (Gneisenau), Daniel Cook (Graf Spee), Michael Melton (Lutzow), Randy Stiponovich (Von der Ton), Chris Pearce (Baden), Kevin Hovis (Bismarck), Jeff Lide (Kirishima), Rick King (Scharnhorst), Tony Stephens (Musashi), Charley Stephens (Yamato), my dad (John Bruder, Zara), my brother (Jacob Bruder, Von der Ton), and myself (Joshua Bruder, Lutzow). That’s thirteen captains, two with 8 unit battleships, one 6.5 unit battleship, three 5 or 5.5 unit battleships, three 4 or 4.5 unit battle cruisers, and four 3 or 3.5 unit cruisers, for a total of 64 units.



The Axis concentrate on the Prince of Wales

Photo by Mike Melton's brother

Battle was called and each of the opposing fleets set up on opposite sides of the northern pond. The Axis held the bridge while the Allies preferred the open water. The fleets sat there for a few minutes staring at each other, waiting for the other to make their move.

Then Chris Pearce led the Axis pigboats in an attack on the Allied fleet. My cruiser force attacked soon after. The Axis

battleships moved in and concentrated their fire on Dana's Prince of Wales. About this time, Daniel Cook and I took off after an Allied cruiser, Matthew Clarke's Louisville I believe. We chased him into the smaller pond where he accidentally beached himself. Daniel and I harassed him a bit before my dad called us off. At first I wondered why he called us off when the cruiser was just sitting there. Then I realized that while running across the grass to see where his boat was going, Matthew had slipped and fallen. He had lost control of his boat and that was why it had beached.

Daniel and I backed off just as Jeff Lide and his Kirishima came into the smaller pond being pursued by Joel Goodman's Indiana and Tim Beckett's North Carolina. Daniel and I promptly left at the arrival of the Allied battleships. As we came into the larger pond the battle was winding down. I called five and went some place to hide. I came off my five and my first sortie at Nats was over.

Axis B vs. Allied B, First Sortie

The Allied B fleet was composed of: Steve Milholland (Marseillais), Robert Rucker (North Carolina), Ted Brogden (Indiana), Don Cole (Alabama), John Whitsell (Invincible), Rick Whitsell (North Carolina), Frank Whitsell (Washington), Chris Au (Malaya), Peter Demetri (King George V), and Patrick Clarke (Invincible). That's ten captains with six 6 unit battleships, one 5.5 unit battleship, two 4 unit battle cruisers, and one 2.5 unit cruiser for a total of 52 units.

The Axis B fleet was composed of: Steve Reynolds (Moltke), Gerald Roberts (Settsu), Jim Pate (Von der Ton), David Haynes (Mutsu), Peter Kunisch (Andrea Doria), Mark Roe (Scharnhorst), Joe Dworniozak (Von der Ton), Fluegal (Baden), Bryan

Finster (Yamato), Mike Tanzillo (Scharnhorst), Lief Goodson (Tirpitz), and Jim Hill (Andrea Doria). That's thirteen captains with two 8 unit battleships, two 6 or 6.5 unit battleships, three 5 or 5.5 unit battleships, and five 4 or 4.5 unit battle cruisers for a total of 65 units.

This sortie began with the



An Italian Battleship presses a South Dakota

Photo by Mike Melton's brother

opposing fleets close to each other. Battle was called and both fleets charged right in. The Axis slow boats attacked the Allied SoDaks almost continuously. About ten minutes into the sortie, Joe Dworniozak's VDT went down. After it was recovered, the melee resumed. After a merciless pounding by the Allied battleships, Lief Goodson's Tirpitz went down also.

Shortly after Lief recovered his boat, the Axis focused their attention (and guns) on Patrick Clarke's I-boat. The chase lasted for about ten minutes before Patrick came off five.

After the chase, no one had any ammo left and the first sortie of B vs. B was over.

Axis A vs. Allied A, Second Sortie

After rearming and some ram patching, the second sortie got under way. The Allies set up in a

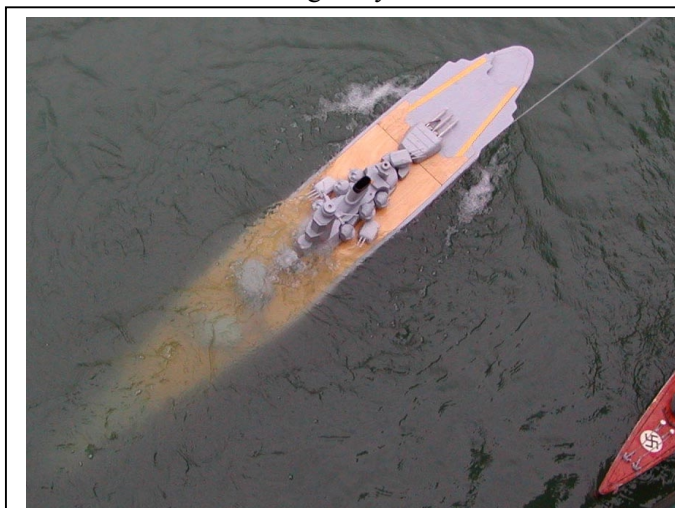
little inlet while the Axis once again set up close to the bridge. Battle was called and the Allied battleships moved in to attack Charley Stephens. While the Allied battleships were attacking the Yamatos, there cruisers remained in the little inlet.

My cruiser force swept in on the Allied cruisers hoping to sink

Matthew Clarke. Our hopes were smashed when the other Allied cruisers attacked us in hopes of driving us off. However, I would not let a few Allied cruisers stop me from getting to the damaged Louisville. I drove the Lutzow in while my dad and Michael Melton drew off the

Allied cruisers. Daniel and I did as much damage as two cruisers could without the help from friendly battleships.

After a while a few Allied battleships moved in to protect the cruisers, driving us away. As I was leaving the inlet I saw Charley's Yamato go under. The Allies cheered as Charley retrieved his ship. It was looking bad for the Axis. After Charley went down, the battle wound down to a few ships. I called five and just sat there watching other boats slug it out. I came off five and brought my boat in. I watched as



A Yamato heads for a rest on the bottom.

Photo by Mike Melton's brother

five or six boats still shot at each other. I put my boat on the bench and prepared to watch the next sortie.

Axis B vs. Allied B, Second Sortie

Battle was called and immediately the Allied battleships had their target. Mike Tanzillo's Scharnhorst was pumping badly and the Allies decided to put him under. The Axis did their best to help, but the Allies would not give up. Mike called five and ran. The Axis had managed to occupy a few Allied battleships, but it looked like it wasn't enough.

The Scharnhorst was looking very bad after a few minutes and nobody thought it would survive. Then Mike called that he was off five and he immediately brought the Scharnhorst in. The Axis gave a banzai cheer. The melee continued with no one looking like they were going to sink. The battle ended with no further incident.

Lunch was delivered, so after everyone had brought his boat in, we ate lunch. The sandwiches were delicious. Captains counted each other's holes and patched their boats for the afternoon battle. Kevin Bray gave an award to Tim Beckett and Chris Grossaint for sinking Charley the last sortie. After patching and reloading, Tom called for us to get the boats on the water.

Fleet Battle #2

Axis A vs. Allied B, First Sortie

The line-up on the Allied fleets were altered slightly due to radio conflicts. Allied B picked up Bob Hoernaman and Jim Coler while losing John Whitsell and Don Cole.

The Axis fleets also changed due to radio conflicts. Axis lost Michael Melton and Jeff Lide while gaining Mark Roe and Joe Dworniozak.

Battle was called and the two organized fleets merged into a mass

of ships. The Axis plan was to concentrate all firepower on the North Carolinas. The battle was raging as I kept the Axis cruisers on the fringe of the fur ball.



Tim Beckett's North Carolina straddles the Axis double team.

Photo by Chris Au

Then we attacked. We concentrated on a single North Carolina, Frank Whitsell's. We attacked time and time again, sometimes being helped by a VDT or Yamato, but we couldn't put the North Carolina under.

Meanwhile, the Stephens brothers tried to put Tim Beckett under but to no avail. During this time someone noticed that the King George V was pumping badly. Immediately, Charley and Tony swarmed the King George V and harmed it with dual side mounts. After a brutal chase the King George V came off five and was pulled off the water. With most of the battleships and cruisers out of ammo, I made some last minute runs on a few Allied battleships. Afterwards I called five and drove the Lutzow near shore. After five minutes I pulled my ship off the water and the first sortie off the afternoon was over.

Axis B vs. Allied A, First Sortie

The boats were put on the water and battle was called. The Axis fleet took off after the nearest Allied SoDak. The Allies responded by attacking "Dirty" Dave's Mutsu. Dirty put up a good fight, but in the

end he succumbed to the merciless pounding from the Allies.

After Dirty recovered his ship, the Axis continued to harass the Allied battleships, putting bb after bb

into the Allies hulls. The harassment continued until some of the Axis called five, now it was the Allies turn. They attacked with what they had, while trying not to endanger their damaged battleships. The sortie ended after each side had been badly

pounded, and it would show in the next sortie.

Axis A vs. Allied B, Second Sortie

Before the sortie was to begin, I talked with my Admiral (Charley) about which ship he wanted the cruisers to attack. He told me to choose an Allied battleship and harass the heck out of it. I chose Frank Whitsell again. The Axis cruisers had hurt him pretty badly last sortie and now I wanted to finish the job.

Battle was called and I led the Axis cruisers to the far side of the lake to wait for the perfect time to attack. As I began to move in the Stephens brother attacked Frank and put him in a Yamato sandwich. Soon all the other Axis battleships joined in along with some Allied to try and help Frank's dying North Carolina. I chose another target, Pete Demetri, and had the Cruisers move in. Just as we were preparing to make our move, a loud "Banzai" was heard. Frank had sunk. This made me happy because I had put a lot of holes into him the last sortie and he hadn't sunk. Now the Axis fleet's attention shifted from Frank to Pete Demetri. Pete ran for the far side of the lake where the Lutzow and the

rest of the Axis cruisers were waiting. We attacked just before both the Allied and Axis fleets arrived. I managed to maneuver the Lutzow out of harms way before the melee began.

Axis concentrated on Steve Reichenbach's Alabama while the Allies concentrated on Mike Tanzillo.

The Axis pounded Steve to no end until he sank. While all the

were under attack the melee had come into the inlet and very close to shore. Shortly after Bryan sank, Fluegal found that he didn't have reverse and beached himself. Luckily Lief was nearby and managed to push Fluegal off shore. Fluegal then went chasing Tim Beckett's North Carolina and beached himself again, this time with no hope of rescue.

As word of Fluegal's beached Baden reached the ears of the Allies, they slowly closed for the kill. A pair of North Carolinas and a South Dakota parked their stern right next to Fluegal's Baden. The Baden was pounded. Charley, hearing of Fluegal's predicament ordered him to declare himself sunk. Fluegal declared himself sunk after receiving Charley's order.

The Allies gave a cheer as everyone looked at Fluegal's bow. Directly under the first turret, there was a huge hole the size of a toy car.



Mike Tanzillo's Scharnhorst lifts her bow high in a final salute.

Photo by Chris Au

After a chase that lasted for about ten minutes, Pete finally went down. The Axis gave another banzai cheer to celebrate. Most of the Axis was out of ammo now so the Allies moved in. They tried several times to put an Axis battleship under but didn't succeed. Finally most ran out of ammo and moved away. The first afternoon battle was complete.

Axis B vs. Allied A, Second Sortie

The Axis and Allied put their fleets on the water. Instantly ships all over started pumping. Battle was called and the melee began. The

Axis battleships were attacking Steve, they left Mike to fend for himself. Mike was chased all over the pond until he also sank. While Mike was leading the Allies on a merry chase around the pond, a few



Bryan Finster takes checking the pumps to extremes.

Photo by Mike Melton's brother



Three Allied Triple Sterns pound the Baden's bow.

Photo by Chris Au

Allied battleships attacked Bryan Finster. After a while Bryan's Yamato too succumbed to its damage and sank.

During the time Steve and Bryan

After Fluegal's predicament was over the Allies needed a target. They chose Peter Kunisch. They chased him all over the lake putting a few holes in him but taking serious damage in return from the assisting Axis fleet. The battle was pretty much over after Peter came of five. So ended the last battle.

We packed up and headed back to the hotel. After unpacking and doing a bit of repairs on my brother's VDT, we went to dinner

with Rick King and Don Cole. Dinner was great and we talked about previous Nats and the day's events. After dinner we came back and had the Axis meeting to discuss what had happened. When the meeting was over we went back to our room and patched our boats. My mom called after the meeting, so we talked awhile. We finally went to bed around 11:00.

Tuesday

We got up around six and packed the boats up into the van. We grabbed a bite to eat on the way to the lake. When we got there it was raining again, so the battle had been postponed until 10:00. We unpacked and made some adjustments on the VDT and Zara. Since we had an hour until we would start battling, I went around and talked with some friends. 10:00 came along and Tom told us to get the boats on the water.

Fleet Battle #3

Axis A vs. Allied A, First Sortie

The Allied A fleet had Doug Hunt, Bob Hoernaman, Jim Coler, Kevin Bray, Brian Lamb, Chris Grossaint, Joel Goodman, Matthew Clarke, Dana Graham, Tim Beckett, and Steve Reichenbach, for a total of 54 units.

The Axis A fleet had Noel and Daniel Cook, Michael Melton, Randy Stiponovich, Kevin Hovis, Jeff Lide, Rick King, Mark Roe, Tony and Charlie Stephens, my dad John, my brother Jacob, and myself, for a total of 63.5 units.

Battle was called and the Allied North Carolinas came out and attacked the Axis heavy hitters. While the battleships side mounted each other, I took the Axis cruisers over into the inlet where the Allied cruisers were hiding. What I didn't notice was that every SoDak on the Allied fleet was there too. I made attack after attack with the Lutzow to try and penetrate the Allied cruisers SoDak defense.

After several failed attempts, I noticed an opening near shore that

the Allies weren't covering. While Kevin Bray and Steve Reichenbach were off chasing my dad and Michael Melton, I moved in through the gap and proceeded to attack the Allied cruisers. Then I noticed the

Joel Goodman's Indiana was just sitting there and not attacking me. Slowly and cautiously, I maneuvered the Lutzow to within two feet of Joel's Indiana. Joel hadn't noticed my approach but Kevin Bray had. Just as I started firing Kevin yelled for Joel to move. I got several good shots into the Indiana before it moved out of range.

About this time, the SoDaks moved to the gap where I had entered. I noticed that they were now heading to the main conflict. Seeing this, I maneuvered in close and started ripping off shots at Kevin's Massachusetts. I observed several good hits before Tim Beckett told Kevin to move away from me.

With the SoDaks now entering the main battle the North Carolinas began to pull back just a bit. Axis attention switched from the North Carolinas to the SoDaks, more specifically Kevin Bray. Kevin made a run for it into the inlet where every axis ship followed him. While Kevin was trying to out maneuver the Axis battleships, I maneuvered the Lutzow to where I thought Kevin would go next. I was right. As Kevin passed two feet behind me I ripped off shot after shot into his ship. Eventually, after a chase that



Two time Best of Scale POW calls up a scale hurricane

Photo by Mike Melton's brother

lasted about seven minutes, Kevin went down. The Axis gave a banzai cheer to celebrate. After a few more minutes of pot shots at passing Allied battleships, I called five. After my five was up I pulled my boat out and watched what was left of this sortie.

While everyone was preparing for the B vs. B sortie, I talked with Joel Goodman. He stated that I was a very persistent and pesky cruiser captain. I told him that once I choose a target I don't give up until it is sunk. After a few minutes of talking with Joel, boats started heading for the water. I went over watch.

Axis B vs. Allied B, First Sortie

The Allied B fleet was made up of John, Rick, and Frank Whitsell, Steve Milholland, Robert Rucker, Ted Brogden, Don Cole, Chris Au, Peter Demetri, and Patrick Clarke, for a total of 52 units.

The Axis B fleet was made up of Steve Reynolds, Gerald Roberts, Jim Pate, David Haynes, Peter Kunisch, Joe Dworniozak, Chris Pearce, Fluegal, Bryan Finster, Mike Tanzillo, Lief Goodson, Lou Meszaros, and Jim Hill, for a total of 65.5 units.

The battle started with the battleships on both sides charging each other. An all out melee developed between the Yamatos and the Allied battleships. The smaller Axis pigboats tried to help were they could without getting hammered in return.

Half way through the sortie, Gerald Robert's Settsu became the focus of attention for a number of Allied boats. After a brief but heavy pounding, the Settsu sank. After the Settsu sank, the Axis doubled their efforts to sink an Allied boat. There target was one of the Whitsell's North Carolinas, I don't know whose. After leading the Axis all over the lake the North Carolina went down.

It was about this time that Bryan Finster called five out of control. I don't know what went wrong with his ship, but it appeared that the throttle was stuck forward and that he could not steer. With the Yamato out of control, the Allies swarmed it to try and put it down. Then the unexpected happened. Peter Demetri called five out of control right as Bryan's Yamato came charging in. The King George V couldn't move. WHAAM!!! The Yamato plowed into the King George V and rolled it under.

After Peter recovered his ship, the Axis targeted Patrick Clarke's I-boat. They chased him all over the lake, doing some damage during the chase. Patrick came off his five in no danger of sinking. Shortly after the chase was over everyone called five and came off the water.

Axis A vs. Allied A, Second Sortie

Battle was called and I lead the Axis cruisers into fight. Our target was Tim Beckett's North Carolina. We attacked repeatedly getting several good hits in the process. During one of our attacks on Tim's North Carolina, Chris Grossaint rammed me. I called ram and brought my ship in. I found a nice crack in the side of my boat and

told Chris that I had damage. I took my boat to the bench and repaired it as quickly as possible.

After a brief repair, the Lutzow was back out again. I continued my attacks on Tim Beckett until he got to far into the battle. I backed off and waited for another target to appear. After a while I decided to go harass the Allied cruisers.

After a brief chase in which I did some damage I called five and watched the rest of the battle. As usual the Allied and Axis battleships were viciously attacking each other. After my five was up I pulled my boat out and went to prepare for the afternoon campaign.

Axis B vs. Allied B, Second Sortie

Boats were put on the water and battle called. Immediately Chris Pearce went into the thick of the action. He attacked passing Allied battleships like there was no tomorrow. Eventually the Allies swarmed him. He received some help from Jim Hill's Andrea Doria for a short while until the Allies attacked Jim. They pursued him for a short while until Jim went under.

After Jim recovered his ship, Allied attention went back to Chris Pearce. The Axis did their best to help Chris, but to no avail. After a fight that lasted about twenty minutes, Chris Pearce went down. The Allies cheered. After Chris recovered his hammered Baden, the Axis took off chasing Pete Demetri. They chased him relentlessly all over the lake, looking for a sink. Pete came off his five without sinking but severely damaged. Shortly after everyone called five and came off the water.

Lunch was delivered and everyone sat and talked about the upcoming campaign. I was especially nervous because I had never done a campaign before. After lunch



Is this what they mean by twin sterns?

Photo by Mike Melton's brother

Patrick Clarke, Daniel Cook, and my brother went of to set up the bases for campaign.

After the bases were set up, the two Admirals talked about which base would be whose. After the discussion was over, Charley called the Axis A fleet over. He told us that the base in the big lake would be our home base and the base in the small lake would be our forward base. He also told us that the shore targets next to our home base are the Allied shore targets and that the ones next to our forward base are our shore targets. Another thing was that the Axis Home base was the Allied forward base and vice versa.

Then Charley told us about the Axis strategy for the campaign. He also assigned duties to each ship captain. After the little meeting we went to the benches to prepare our ships for the first campaign. The Allies had showed up with the Jim Coler's Titanic, Chris Grossaint's Olympic, Steve Reichenbach's Yorktown, Chris Au's British escort carrier, an LST, and possibly Dana Graham's PT boat. The Axis had Kevin Hovis's Altmarck, Rick King's Altmarck, Gerald Robert's Settsu Maru, and two of Mark Roe's Akashis (red and brown). It was going to be an interesting campaign.

Axis A vs. Allied B, 1st Campaign

The campaign began with me attacking the shore targets. Soon Daniel Cook and my dad joined in.

We knocked down a few of them before Daniel started experiencing problems. His ship was going out of control. The Allies swarmed him, doing some damage. Then the Graf Spee beached and sank. Later I found out that Gerald Roberts (who shares the same frequency with Daniel) was testing his ship, and probably drove Daniel's ship long enough for it to be doomed.

Meanwhile the Allies were off chasing our decoy, the Japanese carrier Hiryu. The Hiryu was not a convoy ship but a warship in disguise. It had two pumps exiting the hull below the water line so that no one could see this. While all the Allied battleships were off chasing the Hiryu, Kevin Hovis launched his Altmarck. Kevin was able to go back and forth between the Axis home and forward bases multiple times without any trouble.

While this was happening I continued to shoot at shore targets. I had called five once already and had called five a second time when Fluegal called my brother's name. I went over to Fluegal and told him that Jacob was guarding our shore targets. Fluegal then told me that Jacob was supposed to run Rick King's Altmarck. I told Fluegal that I had just called five and that I was free to drive the Altmarck. Fluegal told me ok and said to wait to launch until he could find me an escort.

While Fluegal was trying to get me an escort, I came off my five. I pulled my boat out and loaded the guns. I went to find my dad and tell him I was driving the Altmarck. I found him standing at the shore of the small lake. I asked him where the Zara was and he pointed to the bow of a ship that was an inch or two out of the water. I asked him what happened and he told me that while he was escorting a convoy ship, Don Cole had ram sunk him. I told him that the Lutzow was on the bench and went to prep the Altmarck for launch.

A few minutes before I launched the Altmarck, the Allies launched the Yorktown. All the Axis battleships attacked the he ship. While the Axis chased the Yorktown all over the big lake, Fluegal had got me an escort. I launched the Altmarck with Charley Stephen's Yamato close by.



The Japanese carrier plays out her decoy role to the hilt.

Photo by Mike Melton's brother

While I was approaching the bridge, Chris Au's Malaya came in to attack me. However, with Charley giving me course alterations and his Yamato always covering the side of me that was in danger, I managed to make it to the Axis forward base without a single hole. The return journey would be the hard one. Little did I know that Mark Roe was launching an Akashi for a forward run (on the same frequency as the Altmarck) at the same time I was launching for a return trip. With Charley close by I launched and headed for the bridge.

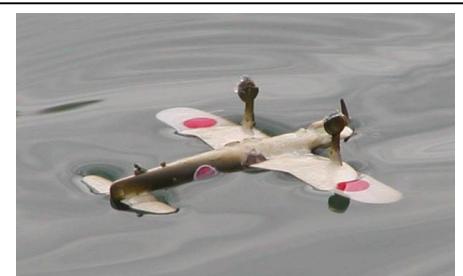
It was as I reached the bridge that big trouble started. First I lost rudder control. Then I lost throttle control. Finally, the Allied battleships had showed up and were looking to sink a convoy. I desperately tried to run and head for the base, but the Altmarck beached far from the objective.

It was at this time that Fluegal, watching the whole thing, decided that I was dead and that my escort/protective barrier could be

used elsewhere. Charley left to go and protect Mark Roe's Akashi, which was also having problems. Then, as the Akashi passed under the bridge, I discovered that I had minimum control over the Altmarck. Minimum, but still some control!! I quickly unbeached myself and made a run for the base.

My five minute sea time had expired only a few second ago. I drove the Altmarck straight at the base, making only tiny rudder adjustments in fear that I would lose control again. With the Allied battleships all over me trying to sink me before I reached the base, I plowed into port and touched the Altmarck.

After returning the Altmarck to the bench, I picked up the Lutzow and headed out again. I launched and moved in on the shore targets. Rick King's Admiral Scheer and Daniel Cook's Graf Spee joined me moments later. Every time we shot



This Zero is belly up, but the Axis fought all week.

Photo by Mike Melton's brother

one down, Fluegal, Lief Goodson, some other captains would shout a banzai cheer. The three of us managed to shoot down all of the targets.

Just as I called five Ted Brogden called that the campaign was over. After I had put my boat on the bench I went and talked about the campaign. It was then that I found out that Steve Milholland had sunk (unseaworthy) and that the Axis had managed to sink both the Titanic and the Olympic. I also found out that Chris Au had declared his escort carrier sunk and that all of both Axis and Allied shore targets had been knocked down. It looked like this campaign went to the Axis.

Axis B vs. Allied A, 1st Campaign

The campaign began and Michael Melton, the only Axis cruiser, went in and attacked the Allied shore targets. While he sat there and knocked down target after target, the Axis launched the Hiryu. The Allies still didn't know it was a decoy so they took off after it. While the Allies were off chasing the Hiryu, the Axis launched one of Mark Roe's two Akashis. During the Akashi-brown journey to the forward base it was ram sunk by an Allied battleship.

Near the shore targets Bob Hoernaman was rammed by Joe Dworniozak's VDT. He pulled his boat out and found a nice hole. He patched it and went back in to protect the Allied shore targets. All of the sudden, the Minneapolis sank. Bob recovered it and found that the patch had come undone. He pulled his boat out and went back to the bench for repairs.

The Axis then launched another Akashi, Akashi-red. The Allies swarmed the convoy ship with every thing they could spare. Akashi-red managed to make it to the forward base. After a short pause it went out again. The Allies were waiting. They swarmed the Akashi a second time and this time managed to sink it after it had beached.

During the chase of Akashi-red, the Settsu Maru had been launched by the Axis and the escort carrier by the Allies. Despite being swarmed by battleships, both the Settsu Maru and the escort carrier managed to make it to their forward bases. However, the Axis relaunched the Settsu Maru and the Allies didn't relaunch the escort carrier. The Settsu Maru was swarmed and sunk before it reached the bridge.

Meanwhile the Allies had launched both the Titanic and the Olympic and the Axis launched Kevin Hovis's Altmarck. The Axis swarmed the two Allied convoy ships. The Titanic sank within fifty feet of where it was launched. The Olympic made it past the bridge before it was beached. As I watched from the bridge directly above the beached Olympic, I saw Bryan Finster and Lou Meszaros Yamatos pull along side and shred the Olympic wide open. After a few seconds of this harassment, Lief Goodson pulled his stern up and poured his dual sterns into the Olympics side. Eventually Charley called off the Axis battleships and allowed a North Carolina to push the Olympic free. As soon as the Olympic was free of the shore its bow went under. The rest of the ship followed soon after. The Axis gave a banzai cheer.

While this was going on, Steve Reynolds' Moltke was ram sunk by an Allied battleship and Joe Dworniozak's VDT went under. Also the Allies launched the Yorktown and a North Carolina went down. The York town managed to make a successful forward and return trip despite listing heavily.

Shortly after the Yorktown returned the campaign was pronounced over. I went to both shore target platforms and found that the Axis still had a few shore targets left while the Allies had none standing. This was due to Jeff Lides excellent defense of our targets and

Michael Meltons excellent shooting of the Allied targets.

After a brief discussion, we packed up and headed back to the hotel. After dinner Charley told us that the Allies now know that the Hiryu was a warship and that there would be no meeting that night. After talking with Charley we went and viewed some photos of the battles at Michael Melton and Mike Tanzillo's room. We were joined by Noel and Daniel Cook a while later. After looking at the photos we went back to our room and went to bed around ten o'clock.

Wednesday

We got up looking forward to a two on two against Patrick and Matthew Clarke later in the day. We got some breakfast and headed back to the hotel. We sat and talked about how Nats was going and who might win. About noon we headed out to the lake. On the way we stopped and picked up some lunch. At the lake Patrick and Randy Stiponovich were preparing for a one on one. While Patrick and Randy battled it out on the big lake, Bob Hoernaman asked if my dad and I would like to participate in a cruiser battle. We both agreed and prepped our ships.

The teams would be, Allied: Bob Hoernaman (Minneapolis), Doug Hunt (Houston), and Matthew Clarke (Louisville). On the Axis: Randy Stiponovich (Akizuki), my dad (Zara), and me (Lutzow). The battle would take place in the small lake and would be two sorties.

The battle began and the cruisers went at it. I chased Doug for a bit while my dad attacked Bob. Randy darted in and out of the battle as he pleased. After a while, Doug's Houston look like it was hurting and my dad and I chased it shooting it when we could. Eventually I ran out of ammo and maneuvered away from the battle. I came off my five about the same time as everyone else.

The second sortie began very similar to the first with small

differences. The Axis team had lost Randy due to he had to finish another battle, but had gained Chris Pearce and his Sheffield. This time the Axis had a target, Doug Hunt. My dad and I worked together to put over half our ammo into him. Eventually Doug went down. After Doug recovered his boat the Axis target moved from him to Bob. We chased him all over the lake but didn't do enough damage to him. The battle ended in an Axis victory.

While my brother and I waited for Patrick to patch his boat, we went over and watched Chris Pearce and Chris Au do a one on one. The Baden and Malaya maneuvered and shot each other when ever the opportunity arose. After about twenty or so minutes of battling, both ships came off the water.

Now it was time for our two on two. Battling would be restricted to the small lake and there would be two sorties. It would be an interesting battle.

The battle began and Jacob and I tried to concentrate on Patrick's I-boat. Then attention shifted from Patrick to Matthew. I chased him all over trying to push him toward my brother's VDT. Sometimes it worked and other times it didn't. Eventually we managed to drive the Louisville under. Now it was two on one. Jacob and I did our best to sink Patrick but to no avail. After a while I called five and hid. I came off five and the sortie was over for me.

I prepped my boat and then went to watch the second sortie of the Baden vs. Malaya battle. The Malaya looked really low in the water and the Baden looked like it could survive. After about fifteen minutes of the ships maneuvering in the middle of the pond the battle moved to the far shore. It was there that both ships shoved their bows on the shore and side mounted each

other. After about twenty seconds of this the Malaya looked like it was going to sink but instead, the Baden

and so did the Clarkes. The battle was over and turned out to be a Clarke family victory.



The Baden-Malaya war ends with a surprise sink.

Photo by Tim Beckett

sank. Chris pulled his boat out and looked it over. Now it was our turn to finish a battle.

As we took the ships to the water, Patrick asked if Matthew could come back in. I was going to say no but Jacob said yes. I could see that Matthew might be trouble but what the heck. The battle started and the cruisers attacked the other teams battle cruisers. After a while I noticed that my stern was getting low and that I could see red on my ship. I called five and proceeded to run for my life. Patrick and Matthew worked very well together at driving me into the other. After a few of these very well executed attacks I thought I was going to sink. Then my timer went off and I immediately called that I was off five. I touched the ship two feet from shore since I was in fear of sinking. The battle was over for me but my brother continued to battle on. After a while my brother called five

aft and one on the conning tower facing forward. After my dad got back with supper, a meeting was called to see if we needed to make four fleets instead of two. It ended up that we had to do it because of a radio conflict.

Night battle

Axis A vs. Allied A

I'm not exactly sure who was on what fleet but I think the fleets were: Frank Whitsell, Joel Goodman, Ted Brogden, Don Cole, and Brian Lamb and Patrick Clarke on the Allied A fleet and Daniel Cook, Lief Goodson, Randy Stiponovich, Jim Pate, and myself on the Axis A fleet.

The battle was crazy. I could easily identify the ships, but



Preparing for Night battle

Photo by Mike Melton's brother

lining up on them was twice as hard as during the day. I managed to line up on Joel Goodman several times and shoot over two thirds of my ammo into him. After several of these attacks I called five and hid in the inlet of the big lake. Then I heard "Man in the water" followed by a "Banzai." I knew an Allied had sunk but whom? It turned out that Patrick Clarke had rammed Frank Whitsell's North Carolina accidentally. My five was up shortly after that and I brought my boat out of the water. It turned out that I only had two holes. I was amazed. The night battle was crazy but it was fun.

Axis B vs. Allied B

As before, I'm not quite sure who was on which fleet. I believe that Chris Au, Steve Reichenbach, Chris Grossaint, Tim Beckett, and Pete Demetri were on the Allied B fleet. The Axis B fleet had Mike Tanzillo, Jeff Lide, Michael Melton, and Gerald Roberts.

For this battle I stood next to Michael Melton to help identify friend and foe for him. The battle began and Michael took off after a SoDak. While Michael was chasing Allied battleships, the Allies were chasing Mike Tanzillo. After Mike came off his five the Allies shifted their attention to Jeff Lide. Jeff had a lot of fun with the chase. He would go full throttle and then when the Allies caught up with him, he would reverse. After Jeff came off five, the battle wound down to a few ships. The night battle was over.

After we packed up we headed back to the hotel. After unpacking only the essentials, we went to bed around eleven.

Thursday

I woke up around six again. We packed up and headed for the lake. We grabbed a bite to eat on the way there. We arrived before most of the others. Charley came over and told me that I would be on Axis B fleet today. I said ok and went to help my dad unpack.

Fleet Battle #4

Axis B vs. Allied A, First Sortie

The Allied A fleet gained Chris Au and Steve Milholland, but lost Doug Hunt, Brian Lamb, Joel Goodman, and Kevin Bray. The Axis B fleet lost Mike Tanzillo but gained Michael Melton and me. The battle started with me taking off to attack a North Carolina. Michael joined me a few minutes later. The Axis seemed to be concentrating on the Malaya while the Allies attacked targets of opportunity. After a few passes with North Carolinas, the Settsu went down.

After the Settsu was recovered, the Allies attacked Jim Hill's Andrea Doria. Joe Dworniozak's VDT got caught in the action and sank after a vicious fight. Shortly after the VDT sank, the Allies resumed their attacks on Jim Hill. After a run and gun fight in the shallows, the Andrea Doria sank.

While the bulk of the Allied fleet was attacking Jim, the Axis fleet was chasing Chris Au. Several times I lined up the Lutzow and shot at the passing Malaya. It was during the chase that Chris rammed Fluegal. Fluegal pulled his boat off the water and found damage. I don't know if the Axis still chased Chris or not because I went out to harass some Allied cruisers.

Out in the middle of the lake were all the Allied cruisers just sitting there. I decided to change that. I screamed in and fired whenever an Allied cruiser passed my stern. Eventually I ran out of ammo and called five. I hid on the

far side of the lake where no one noticed me. I came off five and pulled my boat out. I took my boat to the bench and prepared it for the next sortie.

Axis A vs. Allied B, First Sortie

The battle began with the Axis looking for revenge. They attacked every SoDak that came by. The Axis then targeted Kevin Bray. They chased him all over the lake, trying to put him under. The Axis made several attempts to swarm Kevin, but nearly all of them failed.

Now the Allies attacked, hitting the Axis ships they thought were low on ammo. A melee ensued, with the Allies attacking Mike Tanzillo and the Axis trying to defend him.

While this was going on, my dad led the Axis cruisers against Robert Rucker's North Carolina. My dad made attacks from a distance, putting most of his bbs into Robert's ship. Eventually, Robert got tired of my dad plinking away at his ship from afar and attacked. My dad led Robert on a merry chase around the lake, doing some damage. After awhile, my dad called five and ran from Robert to the opposite shore, leaving Robert to move away, pumping as he left.

Back near the bridge, Mike Tanzillo had managed to survive all the attacks the Allies made on him. He came off his five close to sinking. After this only a few ships remained and most were on there five. I went back to the bench to make sure the Lutzow was ready.



SoDak Shore Shoots sure smart so stop sitting, scram'n squirt, Squirt!

Photo by Mike Melton's brother

Axis B vs. Allied A, Second Sortie

The battle began with the Axis charging in to do some damage. The Allies responded by attacking Lief Goodson's Tirpitz. Jim Pate did his best to help the slowly dying battleship, but could not succeed. After a hard thrashing from the Allies, the Tirpitz sank. The Allies cheered in celebration.

Attention then shifted to Jim Pate's VDT. While most of the Axis were of chasing Chris Au again, the Allies moved in for another kill. Jim put up a good fight, damaging every ship that came near him, but it was only delaying the inevitable. Jim sank after putting up a good fight.

While the Malaya was off leading the Axis fleet around the lake, I continued to attack the Allied cruisers. While I was doing this, Steve Milholland's Marseaillas got stuck in full reverse. It became beached in the sandy bottom of the big pond's inlet. Seeing the beached cruiser, I called the other Axis captains over and proceeded to attack the helpless ship. I maneuvered the Lutzow in and proceeded to empty my magazines into Steve's bow. Michael Melton joined in the attack after a few minutes. After my magazines were empty I called five and started to prop wash the cruiser. Then a few Axis battleships attacked the cruiser. After a merciless pounding the Marseaillas sank. We all gave a banzai cheer to celebrate.

I came off five shortly after the cruiser sank. I pulled my boat out and took it to the bench. I patched and reloaded after Bob Hoernaman had counted my holes. After patching I went out to watch the next sortie.

Axis A vs. Allied B, Second Sortie

The Axis tried to concentrate their fire on Kevin Bray and Don Cole. The Axis battleships continuously attacked Kevin in hopes of sinking him. The other Allied battleships tried to help but they only received a hole in the side whenever they approached. Eventually Kevin

managed to escape the Axis onslaught and ran into the small lake with only a few pursuers.

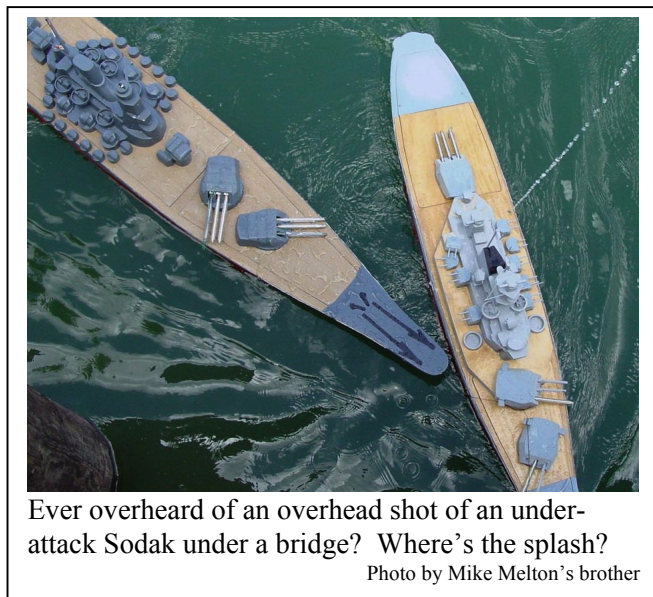
While Kevin was under attack my dad once again led the Axis cruisers against Robert Rucker. Robert tried to chase my dad off but my dad would not give up. After Kevin had run away, the Axis needed a target and they chose Robert Rucker. Soon enough the Stephens brothers arrived on the scene and tore apart Robert's North Carolina. Robert tried to run but couldn't escape. After a vicious fight, Robert's North Carolina went down. The Axis cheered.

After Robert went down the Axis once again targeted Kevin Bray. The small lake became filled with ships. The Axis attacked time and time again, trying to sink Kevin. After a long chase, Kevin came off his five. The Axis attacked whomever they could until they ran out of ammo. Most of the ships had run out of ammo so I went to the bench to prepare the Lutzow for the campaign.

After a wonderful catered lunch, Charley called over all the Axis captains for a meeting. He told us that the bases were reversed, so we would launch from the small lake and shoot the targets next to our launch point. After the meeting Fluegal and Charley meet and decided who would do what for the campaign. Since I was the only cruiser on the Axis B fleet, it would be my job and my job alone to knock down the allied shore targets.

Axis B vs. Allied B, 2nd Campaign

I started off by shooting the Allied shore targets. I managed to shoot down a few before Patrick Clarke's I-boat came around and chased me



off. I made several attempts to knock down the targets, each time downing one or two before Patrick chased me away. After getting six targets I called five and just sat there. The Allies had launched their LST and several Axis ships were hammering it. It sank about thirty feet away from port. My five was up just as the Axis launched Kevin Hovis's Altmarck. I pulled my boat out and quickly rearmed.

I got the Lutzow back on the water quickly. I immediately went after the targets. With all of the Allied boats chasing the Altmarck, I could operate uninterrupted. I shot down another four targets before Patrick's I-boat came back. I was out of ammo any way and had called five two minutes before. After my five was up I pulled the Lutzow out and rearmed as fast as possible.

I put the Lutzow in just as Mark Roe and Peter Kunisch were preparing to launch Akashi-red. I launched and waited for the Akashi to launch knowing that the Allies would ignore me and attack the Akashi. The Akashi launched and the Allies came closer. As soon as it was off its thirty-second grace period the Allies hammered it. I proceeded to attack the targets, managing to down two more before the Allies returned. They had sunk the Akashi

right as it neared the bridge. I called five and waited.

The Allies launched their escort carrier about this time. The Axis were waiting and sank it just as it entered the smaller lake. I came

the Alabama sank, I was alone for a minute or two. When the Allied fleet did show up I had one minute left on my timer. With thirty-seconds remaining, Lief Goodson

accidentally backed into me, putting a nice hole in the Altmarck's stern. I did my best to bring the Altmarck in, but it sank with only sixteen seconds remaining.

After I put the Altmarck back on the

anyone beside Don sank and did any of our convoys get through. He told me that Steve Reichenbach's warship was rammed and that Doug Hunt had sunk. He also told me that Kevin Hovis's Altmarck and the Settsu Maru had both made the forward run. I also found out that the Axis had some shore targets remaining. After putting the Lutzow on the bench, I went to watch the next campaign.

Axis A vs. Allied A, 2nd Campaign

The Axis began by launching Kevin Hovis's Altmarck and Akashi-brown. The Allies swarmed both ships, concentrating on the Altmarck first. The Altmarck made it to the speed trial marker, lopped around it and sank bow first.

The Akashi managed to get past the bridge into the big lake with the help of the Stephens brother's Yamatos. There the Allies swarmed it, hitting it with everything. Eventually, the Akashi couldn't take anymore and sank.

Meanwhile, the Allies launched the escort carrier. It made it into the small lake before being chased by Chris Pearce's Baden. The escort carrier led the Baden on a merry chase around the lake before heading to port. There a Yamato attacked the escort carrier. The

off five and quickly pulled the Lutzow out. After rearming I went out again just as we launched the Settsu Maru. I attacked the targets again downing two more for a total of fourteen. It was at this time that Lou Meszaros and his Yamato joined me.

"Hey Lou, could you help me down some of these targets?" I asked.

"Sure" he responded. His Yamato backed right up and knocked down three targets on a single pass. He made another pass and knocked down two. I tried to hit the last one but I ran out of ammo. I called five just as Lou hit the last target. I sat there and waited out my five. I came off my five and put the Lutzow on the bench. I went to where all the Axis convoy ships were and prepared to launch Rick King's Altmarck.

I launched and immediately the Allies closed in. After my thirty-seconds were up they swarmed my escort and me. I managed to make it into the large lake with minimal damage. As I neared the Axis forward base, Don Cole came out to attack. The Axis stopped him but in the heat of battle, one Axis battleship pushed Don's Alabama under. After

bench, I took the Lutzow out again. The Allies had launched the Yorktown and it was entering the big lake as I launched. Bryan Finster and Lou were already harassing the carrier by the time I arrived. The Yorktown had developed a list to port and I proceeded to maneuver the Lutzow to the starboard side. I emptied half my magazines into the Yorktown. After a while Steve told us that the main deck was below the water and that we could stop shooting.

Shortly after the Yorktown sank the Axis launched Akashi-brown. The Allies swarmed it and sank it after it passed the bridge. A few minutes after the Akashi went down, Charley called that the campaign was over. I went over to Charley to ask him if



The Allied CVE tries to duck the enemy escort.

Photo by Mike Melton's brother



Is that carrier listing due to a hard turn? A mighty broadside? Or a sudden blast of Baden breath?

Photo by Mike Melton's brother

carrier managed to make to port safely despite heavy damage.

The Axis launched Akashi-red and the Allies launched the LST. The Akashi sank about sixty feet from its launch point after being attacked by a few North Carolinas and SoDaks. The LST managed to make it into the small lake before a few Axis heavy hitters attacked it too. It came within fifty feet of the port before sinking.

While the battleships were attacking convoys, Michael Melton, Daniel Cook, and Noel Cook were attacking the allied shore targets. With expert marksmanship and teamwork, they managed to knock down all the targets. While this was happening, my dad and brother tried to defend the Axis shore targets. My dad's Zara and Jacob's VDT were no match for a North Carolina, an I boat and two Allied cruisers. Jacob's VDT was trying to defend the targets but was rammed and shoved under the PVC pipes. My dad had to go out and pull his boat out from under the pipe frame before it sank since the rear end was under water. Eventually all the Axis targets were knocked down and the Allied ships left.

About this time the Axis launched the Settsu Maru. It managed to make it past the bridge before being sunk. Shortly after that Randy Stiponovich's Akizuki sank. The Allies then launched the Yorktown and the Axis launched Akashi-red again. Akashi-red didn't make it very far, it sank while approaching the bridge. The Yorktown, however, managed to make port despite an all out assault by Charley and my dad.

Shortly after the Yorktown made port the campaign was pronounced over. My brother and I packed up while my dad talked with Charley. After our dad was done, we headed back to the hotel. We unpacked and then went and lounged in the pool. Fluegal, Charley, Kevin, and a few others were already there.

Jeff Lide and Gerald Roberts soon joined us. After a bit in the pool we decided to get some dinner.

After we got back, we went out to the pool for a drawing Steve Milholland was having for all the captains with Swampworks products in their boats. I got two tickets and my dad got one. The prizes were: several sets of props, a special type of cleaner, some American range finders, a set of Arizona turrets, some Lutzow and Bismarck secondary turrets, and a kit. Others there included: Patrick and Matthew Clarke, Daniel and Noel Cook, John, Frank, and Rick Whitsell, my dad, brother, and myself along with a few others. I was drawn twice late in the drawing. I chose the Lutzow secondary turrets and the Arizona turrets. Doug Hunt won the kit. It was an USS Atlanta. After the drawing, and feeding some very hungry mosquitos, we went back to our room and relaxed. My mom called again and we talked with her a bit before going to bed around 11:30.

Friday

We got up around six for the last day of Nats. We packed up the van and headed for the lake, grabbing some breakfast on the way. We arrived at the lake around seven, unpacked and got the boats ready for the first sortie.

Fleet Battle #5

Axis A vs. Allied A, First Sortie

The fleets had changed quite a bit since Monday. On the Allied A fleet was Chris Au, Don Cole, Frank Whitsell, Dana Graham, Chris Grossaint, Tim Beckett, and Matthew Clarke.

On Axis A fleet was Noel and Daniel Cook, Mark Roe, Mike Tanzillo, Chris Pearce, Charley and Tony Stephens, Jeff Lide, Rick King, Michael Melton, Kevin Hovis, my dad and my brother.

The battle began with the Axis fleet attacking Chris Au. The Allied fleet tried to help but couldn't risk getting too deep in the action. During the chase Daniel Cook sank and Chris Pearce rammed Chris Au. Chris Au didn't call it. His ship began to pump very badly and the stern began to get low. Chris turned the Malaya toward shore and beached it right as it sank. Banzais could be heard from the lakeshore.



An uncalled ram sinks the Malaya

Photo by Mike Melton's brother

After Chris sank the Axis targeted Dana Graham. They chased him to the far side of the pond. There Charley accidentally rammed the Zara. The Zara's stern went under as Charley rolled it over. The Zara was able to come back in but the sink had cost the Axis 700 points.

Meanwhile the Axis continued to chase Dana. They put many holes into the POW and all the North Carolinas trying to protect it. After a while Dana came off five and pulled his boat out. Then Kevin Hovis's Bismarck's throttle went dead. Chris Grossaint and Tim Beckett both parked right next to the helpless battleship. The cavalry arrived soon after in the form of Charley's Yamato and Tony's Musashi. A vicious melee ensued in which every Axis ship moved in to protect their wounded fleet mate. After five minutes of this Kevin called that he was off five and started wading into the water to recover his ship. After both his feet were firmly on dry land, the battle resumed.

The Axis ships were low on ammo and shot every Allied boat that came by. Soon enough everyone

was out of ammo and pulled their ships out.

Axis B vs. Allied A, First Sortie

On the Allied B fleet were Doug Hunt, Brian Lamb, Jim Coler, Kevin Bray, Peter Demetri, Joel Goodman, Rick and John Whitsell, Robert Rucker, Ted Brogden, Steve Milholland, and Patrick Clarke.

On the Axis B were Steve Reynolds, Gerald Roberts, Jim Pate, David Haynes, Peter Kunisch, Joe Dworniozak, Fluegal, Bryan Finster, Lief Goodson, and Jim Hill. The sortie began with the Allies trying to sink Peter Kunisch. During the week the Allies had tried to sink Peter but always failed. Now they wanted to finish the job. Peter, with some help from Tony, managed to out maneuver almost every attack the Allies made on him.

While most of the Allies chased Peter, the Axis fleet attacked Ted Brogden and Kevin Bray without interruption. Ted managed to lead several Axis ships out into the middle of the lake away from Kevin, but the Axis wouldn't give up. They chased Kevin into the inlet where he ran aground. He declared sunk just as the first of the Axis battleships started firing. The Axis captains gave a banzai cheer.

After Kevin recovered his ship, the Axis went after Ted Brogden. Peter had come off his five so this time there was a few Allied battleships to help Ted out. After a long chase, Ted came off his five and most off the Axis battleships went to the far side of the pond to wait out there fives. I went back to the bench to prepare the Lutzow.

Axis A vs. Allied A, Second Sortie

Both the fleets were the same except I joined Axis A (there had been a mix up earlier so I missed the first sortie) and the Allies had lost Chris Au.

The Axis strategy was to first sink Dana and then attack targets of opportunity. I led the Axis cruisers to the far side of the lake

anticipating that our fleet mates would chase him out that way. I was correct. Dana was running from the entire Axis fleet and heading right at us. I turned the Lutzow to exploit the movements of the other cruisers. The POW passed two feet behind and I ripped shot after shot into the side of the passing battleship. After a chase that lasted about ten minutes, Dana finally sank. All the Axis captains cheered.

At this time either Tim or Chris noticed that Kevin Hovis's Bismarck had gone to hide in the small lake. It had taken the Allies two minutes to notice him and now he had only three minutes to go. Charley and Tony placed their boats in between the Bismarck and the attacking North Carolinas. Every time the North Carolinas would come close, Kevin would circle around the Yamatos to the opposite side from the North Carolinas, stop and pump out. Then when the North Carolinas got through again, he would repeat the maneuver.

He did this until his five was up. After he had pulled the Bismarck out, the battle resumed. All the other Allied captains were already out of the water, which left Chris Grossaint and Tim Beckett as the only Allies on the water. The Axis drove Chris to the narrow part of the small pond where there was the low bridge. Chris was trapped. He tried to head for open water, but sank before he could make it.

Shortly after Chris sank, Rick King's Scharnhorst sank. Rick later told me that it was due to an undeclared ram.

After Chris's sink, Tim Beckett was the only Allied ship on the water. The Axis swarmed him, only to hear him call that he was off five. I pulled the Lutzow out and took it to the bench. Then I heard a cheer. Jeff Lide had sunk Chris Pearce!! The sortie had not officially ended so the sink counted. This made a few of us Axis captains unhappy. After packing up some stuff I went over to the lake to watch the last sortie of Nats.

Axis B vs. Allied B, Second Sortie

Once again the Allies chased Peter. Peter put up a good fight, which was only delaying the inevitable. The Allies would not give up. They chased Peter relentlessly until finally, he sank.

After Peter sank, the Allies targeted "Dirty" Dave. They chased the Mutsu until it reversed itself into shore. After a long and brutal pounding, the Mutsu rolled over. The Allies cheered ecstatically. The Axis, trying to make up for lost points, concentrated on Joel Goodman's Indiana. Joel fought back, but the Axis wouldn't give up. Then, when it looked like Joel was going to sink, he announced that he was off five. He drove his boat to shore and touched it only moments before it sank.



Sometimes the ship shoulders the load, sometimes it don't.

Photo by Mike Melton's brother

After Joel came out of the water, the Axis did what they could to try and sink an Allied ship. The sortie ended without any more chases or sinks.

After the last boat was out of the water and on the benches, Charley called all the Axis captains over for a meeting. First he gave out some awards. Then it was time to elect next years Admiral and Vice-Admiral. We elected Bryan Finster as Admiral and Fluegal and Jim Pate as Vice-Admirals.

After the meeting, Steve gave instructions on how to get to the USS Texas. We finished packing up and headed for the hotel. We stopped for lunch on the way and talked about the week. After we got to the hotel, we cleaned up and relaxed.

Around 3:15 we left for the USS Texas, where the banquet was being held. We arrived around 4:10. We went into the gift shop and purchased a few souvenirs, then went aboard and talked with some friends. I walked around the ship while my dad was talking. We then went to A Turret just before five. Everyone was there. Some were in uniforms and some not. I was wearing a Hawaiian shirt that my dad bought for me in Florida. The shirt is covered with American battleships all over it.

After everyone arrived at A Turret, we got together for a few group photos. After the photos, we went into the port air castle and ate dinner. After almost everyone had

gotten food, Steve Reichenbach announced the scores over the loud speaker.

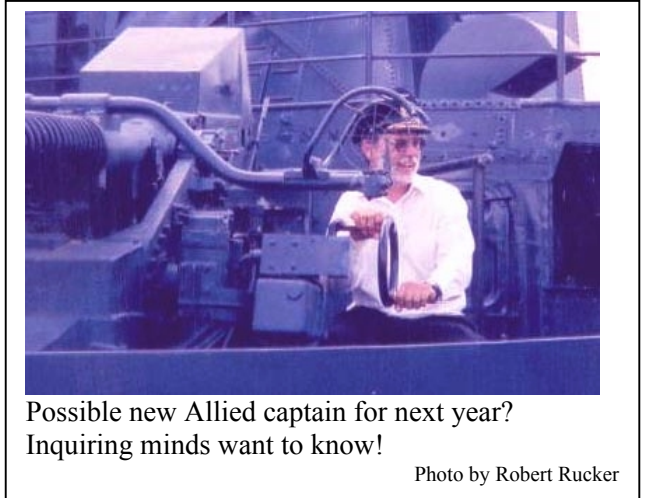
The Allies won 153,535 to 138,875.

All the Axis captains sighed. Then we thought "O well, there's always next year". After a wonderful barbecue dinner we all went to the bow for the awards and the drawing for a new digital 6-channel radio and two copies of last years NATS footage. Daniel Cook won the radio. He was very happy because he had purchased Charley Stephens old VDT earlier.

The Best Dressed Award went to Kevin Bray who was wearing an American Naval officer's uniform. The Best of Scale award went to Dana Graham's PT boat. Rookie of the Year went to Steve Reynolds.

The Class winners were: Class 1/2 -Steve Milholland, Class 3-Matthew Clarke, Class 4-John Whitsell, Class 5-Chris Au, Class 6-Chris Grossaint, Class 7-Charley Stephens. The Founder's Trophy went to Tim Beckett. The Most Feared Allied went to Tim Beckett. The Most Feared Axis went to Charley Stephens. The Sportsmanship Cup went to Rick King, with the Victory Trophy going to Ted Brogden.

After the awards were given



out, we split into two groups and toured the ship. We got to go in places the public can't normally go. It was amazing. The best part was being able to go into the bridge and look at what the captain would have seen.

We left the Texas around 8:30 with Rick King. After we got back to the hotel we packed up for the trip home the next day and relaxed. We went to sleep around 10:00.

Saturday

We left the hotel around 6:00 in the morning. Many people had already left. We got some breakfast about two hours down the road. During the drive we talked about the week. We talked about all the different ships, strategies, and what could have been done differently.

We stopped for lunch in Dalhart, Texas. We talked about next years Nats and trying to find a pond in Colorado Springs to hold Nats 2004. After fourteen hours of driving we got home around seven in the evening, unpacked and settled back in to our new home.

Well here is where I end my account of Nats 2002. Thanks to everyone for making this years Nats such a blast for my family and me. Now it's on to bigger and better things, such as a Vittorio Veneto and Nats 2003!!!



The Best of Scale PT boat

Photo by Mike Melton's brother

A Tale from 1 of 3 Rookies

By Steve Reynolds,
Rookie of the Year



I have titled my Rookie of the Year "write-up" A Tale from 1 of 3 Rookies because I am one of three. Mike Tanzillo, Mike Melton and I all discovered this hobby around the same time and have worked together all year long. There is no way that I would have had the honor of winning the Rookie of the Year without them. We have spent many hours together learning boats, talking boats, sharing tools and epoxies, working in Melton's garage, our current dry dock. Without the help of the fellow Austin, TX rookies I would not have been able to build a reliable competitive ship that gave me the opportunity win the MWC Rookie of the Year award.

I am going to go through the past year and a half since I found out about this crazy hobby, in chronological order through this article. Some areas will be brief and others, such as NATS get a little lengthy. Now to start at the beginning...

Mike, Mike and I all work at Motorola. It was really slow around March of last year and we didn't have much else to do but sit on our backside and pass the time. One of our favorite time passers is surfing the Internet. I can't quite recall what Mike T was searching for on the Internet at the time, but he came across one of the Model Warship websites. He let Mike M and I know about it and we were all very excited. I remember thinking that when I was younger I would have killed to have a boat with guns. The feeling of actually having the ability to build myself a warship to battle other warships was overwhelming. For months before I ordered my Moltke,

I could not stop reading about the hobby. I could not learn enough. Mike T decided in April that he was going to order a Scharnhorst hull from Battler's Connection and by May he had his beauty.

I had begun setting funds aside for my boat, but would eye different boats day to day. We found out through the region 4 list that there was going to be a meeting and small battle near College Station on June 2. Mike T. and I decided to go out to College Station and check it out first hand. Mike T. had started on his Scharnhorst, so he thought it would be a great opportunity to see the boats in action and maybe get some pointers for his Scharnhorst. What we saw was quite small, but it still amazed us. There were 2 cruisers, a Portland and a Houston run by Steve Reichenbach and Patrick Clark. Being that both of these people are great captains and great ambassadors of the sport, we learned a lot. On the way back I decided that it was for sure and the next week I ordered my Moltke from Swampworks. I received the Moltke sometime in July/August.

In mid August the TNB_DFW had a battle and Mike T. worked hard on the Scharnhorst to make the battle. I had prior plans and the Moltke only had a subdeck in, so I did not attend. Mike T came home with tons of information and a tale of how getting guns to work is not easy.

From September to November everything kind of gets blurry. But, I know that I did a lot of work on the Moltke. I had a goal from the beginning to have the Moltke done by the Pearl Harbor Memorial Battle in Dallas on December 5th, but my goals are often lofty. I spent the entire two days before the Memorial Battle working on the Moltke to get it ready for the Memorial Battle, only to realize early in the morning (a couple of hours before Mike T showed up to pick me up) that I was not going to

be ready. So, I declined the ride to Dallas, which relieved major stress.

Things begin to run together again from December to March. Mike M ordered his Lutzow and received it around Christmas time. At this point we had 2 semi-working boats and we could start to see results of all our work. Over these 4 months we started working weekly every Thursday in Mike M's garage, the current Austin dry-dock. In February and March we put the boats in the water a few times and learned that there are many kinks that will need to be worked out before our boats are truly battle worthy.

April 13th, the Moltke's official day of reckoning. Mike T and I made the truck to Dallas for the TNB_DFW first battle of the new season. It was really a mess, listed below is a summary of what happened and what I learned from the experience:

1. Sank the first sortie.
2. Had to call 2 five out of controls in sorties due to losing rudder control.
3. Sank in the last sortie.
4. As expected my guns did not work up to par.
5. Learned that it is going to be an uphill battle to get my boat able to compete with the guys in my region.
6. Found out the hard way how important internal and gun armor is.
7. Learned that the Moltke must have 2 working rudders to get the maximum rudder area.
8. Met a whole new crew of people Fluegel, Kevin Bray, Ted Brogden, Bryan Finster, Chris Pearce, Mike Maxwell, Doug Hunt, and Brian Lamb. Again Steve Reichenbach and the Clarks were there as well.
9. Left knowing that this was going to be a challenge and that I was hooked for good.

The second round came for the Moltke on the fourth of May. Mike Melton and Mike Tanzillo attended this battle at a pond located at the Bomberfield RC airplane airport

outside of College Station. This was a much better outing than my first. Even though I started the day on the wrong foot (which seems to be a trend). I had redone the wiring in the Moltke and made the mistake of wiring the motors in series rather than parallel. I learned real quickly why not to do this. If it weren't for Mike M. having some wires with clamps on them, the Moltke would not have made it. I was happy because the Moltke made 3 of the 4 sorties, only missing the first sortie, while fixing my wiring blunder. Again listed below are my major events of the battle:

1. No sinks
2. Guns worked better.
3. Learned that no matter how prepared you think you are, something is going to come up and you are going to have to ask for help. Either with parts or knowledge.
4. Learned that the people in this hobby are very giving and want to help. Which is not very common in everyday life.
5. Felt a little confident in my boat for the first time.

The real test of fortitude came at The Fray at Bray's. Mike T and I took a road trip to attend The Fray in Siloam Springs, Arkansas to battle in Kevin's newly built pond. This battle seemed to bring everyone out. I believe that there were over 25 battlers attending with over 20 boats on the water per sortie. I learned more in these 2 days about what I need to know to make my boat competitive, than I had learned all year. I received bundles of information and pointers from all of the great experienced Captains at the event. Once again I was awe struck that other experienced captains were letting me in on how to make my boat better. I felt at times as if they were sharing dark secrets. I walked away from The Fray with what I felt was a true understanding of how the Moltke needed to improve to be effective and competitive. Two days of nothing but boats, battling, food,

new friendships, and great fun. The Fray was a great set-up for the week of NATS. Following the previous format, listed below is a brief summary of events:

1. Sank once on the first day.
2. Sank twice on the second day.
3. Did not miss a sortie.
4. Learned about clamps on the end of pushrods. (Fixing my rudder problems)
5. Discovered that a notch on the prop shaft can save a prop.
6. Learned I needed to add more weight to my boat in battery power.
7. Was caught in a Pearce and Au sandwich while out of control on shore. That taught me that if you are out of control, stuck on shore and between those to captains...go ahead and declare. Survived my 5, but ended up sinking early in the next sortie.
8. Found out that the pump in my boat all season was the wrong pump. I had been sent a cruiser size pump from Swampworks. Got the appropriate pump from him there.
9. Found out that sleeping is not on the agenda when battling is to be done the next day. This one is important.
10. Found out how cool it would be to have a pond in my back yard.
11. Noticed that butterflies in the stomach peak right before battle is called. Every time.
12. When I left there was a true sense of accomplishment, not that I had done anything significant, but that there was some comfort while captaining the Moltke. Up to this point I was running scared, afraid of the next failure, not sure of how to engage, now there was a little confidence.

As June and July crept up it was time to access everything that was learned and fix the Moltke up to be competitive for a full week of NATS. This really seemed like a lofty goal, since pretty much once a

day up to that point I had some sort of failure. I stripped the Moltke down to just ribs and subdeck. From that point I pretty much rebuilt it with all of the notes that I had been taking along the way. Working every chance I had as well as every Thursday at Mike M's, made me confident that I had accomplished just about everything I had set to do for NATS. I was ready to go...

Friday before NATS (we were leaving Saturday) disaster struck. We went out to a small local pond to test our boats, guns, pumps, and mark our new waterlines. It was going to be a great day. For the night before the Moltke, Scharnhorst, and Lutzow were running like champs (in dry-dock of course). Once at the pond we did the normal set-up/move from the cars to the tables. We were all setting everything up, loading the guns and gas, and putting the batteries in the boats. In the Moltke I hooked up the pump to its battery and then drive battery to the "brain"... (Oops) Immediately I saw wires shrivel up and smoke, I instantly pulled the battery from power. Something definitely went wrong, I think I hooked up the battery into the wrong deans, the one from the switches to the motor. DOH. Subsequently I fried one of my switches. (NOTE: make your boat idiot proof) For, I was the idiot in this case. I did get to mark my waterline, but I was worried that this was a bad sign for the week to come. The day went much better for Mike T and Mike M. The Scharnhorst and Lutzow looked good on the water, guns even fired. I spent all night that Friday night trying to fix the switch situation. By the end of the night I had put a new switch in and the Moltke looked ok to run. I painted the hull and finished preparing for the coming week. I was filled with the hope that the switch wasn't the beginning of a chain of events to come.

Saturday came and it was time to load up and head out for the

highly anticipated first NATS. The evening was filled with meeting people, looking over their boats, in awe over the PT boat, and trying to settle down and relax. Before even trying to sleep we each went over our ships hoping that all would work for us in the morning.

Woke up **Sunday** for the ceremonial NATS Day 1 testing of the boats. We arrived at the H&H Ranch to see what I perceived to be the holy lands of MWC. I had not been to any NATS previous, but this setup was most excellent. A grand pavilion for shade, just about a table per ship, outlets at each table, and that's not to mention the beautiful pond. I was excited. Testing began. Immediately (of course) my repaired switch failed. I was quite frustrated by this and was not sure the best approach to fixing the problem. I had made the mistake of installing a 5amp switch that was not working correctly. Luckily there were plenty of helping hands and voices around to keep me calm. I figured that I could deal with the propulsion problem once all the other tests were complete. I caught Chris Au in his rounds and had my regulator checked. It was high...more frustration, but again there was someone to help me. Randy S. showed me a couple of methods to

getting the regulator at the right pressure. The first was to give it an overall cleaning, which did not fix my regulator. But, then he showed me the real secret of shaving off a very small amount from the spring with a Dremel drum sander. Thanks to his great work and knowledge my regulator was right on at the next test. Next up was the dreaded drop test, by Kevin Bray. I had no clue of how hard my hull would be, or if I sheeted it correctly. I was hoping I did not use too much paint or dope on the sheeting. Luckily I passed on 3 of 3 drops, which really relaxed me because I knew there was only one thing to work on. Mike T. and Mike M. passed speed and regulator tests, but did not fare as well on the drop tests. Kevin dropped the tester on Mike M's stringer of his Lutzow twice and he failed. He did not realize that it was on his stringer until he had already taken action by sanding his hull to try and thin it out. The Lutzow did pass on the next try. Mike T. had similar problems and failed the test as well, but he passed after sanding his hull down a bit. There is nothing more taxing on a rookie than failing a boat test on Sunday with no clue of how to make it right. I was fortunate in that I knew my problem was my switch. The only thing wrong with that is

that no one had a 10 or 15 amp switch out there, so my speed test had to wait. I was up until about 3 o'clock that evening fixing the switch. I had intended to test speed Monday morning, but it rained right up until the first sortie.

Again, I was going to test it Tuesday, but it rained right up until the first sortie. I did not do any one on ones Wednesday and that gave me an opportunity to pass my speed test.

Monday we only got about 3 hours of sleep which did not seem to faze us. I was amped to get the now working Moltke out there and see what it could do, or if it could do anything... It was raining in the morning, so we were delayed about an hour before the first sortie. There was time to sit and ponder the beginning of my first NATS. Luckily I was on B fleet and had the opportunity of watching the A fleets battle first. The first sortie was a good one, at the beginning it took a while for anyone to engage. I heard the term a Mexican stand off from a couple of captains, the Axis fleet sat on one side of the pond with sterns ablazing and the Allied fleet sat on the other side sterns toward the Axis. I thought it was really cool. But, once one boat made the move battle was on. It came time for the B fleets and man was I nervous. Nervous that the Moltke was going to continue to have failures (as it had up to that point) and that I would be nothing but a hindrance to the fleet. I put the boat on the water and battle was called. The Moltke worked nicely! My guns were firing hard and I was able to battle well, never in trouble of sinking. The second sortie went similar and to my surprise I was one of the last ones on the water with Fluegel. That had never happened before, I had always wondered how Fluegel stayed on the water so long and there I was the last one pulling my boat off the water with him. That was really an encouraging feeling. I seemed to hold my own, tried to not let ships run from our slower fleet, and did a good job avoiding serious damage. The second battle of the day went just as well and I was very happy with my boat's performance. Mike M had a very productive day as well. Mike T had the unfortunate problem of getting a piece of plastic



The Moltke stands by to take off Allied survivors.

Photo by Mike Melton's brother

stuck in his pump outlet, which by the end of the second sortie ended up (barely) sinking. But, the Scharnhorst ended up performing well overall. We all went back to the hotel happy. That night I was juiced from the great first day, I had a lot of things to work on and test to make sure that they were ready for Tuesday. So, no sit down dinner, just fast food as there was too much work to do.

On **Tuesday** I believe that we woke up a little late and it was my fault for shutting off the alarm. But, we were not late by any means and due to the weather we were actually early. After systems check I felt relaxed about my boat situation enough to leave it for a while to socialize. While it was raining I got a chance to put names and boats to faces. There are some really good builders and you can learn a lot by trying to dissect the inside of others boats. Battle did commence and there were even some rainy sorties that made for some great photographs. The Moltke continued to perform well in both sorties in the morning. Again being one of the last ones on the water in both sorties. I even received some compliments about good captaining and dishing out more damage than I received, which really made me feel good. In the afternoon was the first Campaign. I was unsure of exactly what was going to happen, but still felt confident since I had read Lars' versions of previous NATS and understood the rules. The Moltke was assigned the duty of target blocking. So, my job was to sit between the guns of cruisers and the targets and absorb bb's. This was a big change for me, since I worked hard with the shifty Moltke to avoid bb's. I felt that I did a great job at this. I had helped in keeping the Allies from knocking down 12 of 20 targets until a North Carolina decided to get rough with the Moltke. The North Carolina tried to push me out of the way; which I was

not going to take lightly, and ended up rolling the Moltke over. This was good in that we received sink points for the ram sink, but bad in that the Moltke went down for the first time. Fortunately there were no convoy ships on the water and I went in to get the sunken ship. The Moltke did take a lot of damage, but after the sink all systems were still functional. The water box did have a slight leak, but nothing significant that a night of drying would not fix. Mike T and Mike M also had a very productive campaign. Mike M's Lutzow took out most of the targets and there

boats. The Scharnhorst and the Lutzow both had good showings (from what I could see) in the battle.

Thursday was the day to get back on track. In the morning was a battle and the afternoon was another Campaign. Things start to get fuzzy here; Tuesday and Thursday are hard to separate in memory since they had the same format. But, from what I can recall it was personally a great day, but Mike T and Mike M had a couple of issues. The Moltke again was running great, I had found that I lost a tooth on one of my nylon gears and replaced it; I had also lost a



Steve's Moltke screens the shore targets under fire from the Allied cruisers

Photo by Mike Melton's brother

were none left for the Axis at the end of the Campaign. Mike T really enjoyed campaign and learned that the Scharnhorst is a great campaign boat because of its size and triple sterns. Tuesday night was filled with stories and plenty of rest since none of us were competing early on Wednesday.

Wednesday was a much more relaxed day. I believe that Mike M and Mike T went to the hobby shop and ran around, and I slept. We worked on the boats for a while, Mike T and Mike M prepared for night battle and I got the Moltke ready to speed test. We went out to battle around 7pm. I hurried and got the Moltke to speed before the sun went down and even had time to watch some cruiser battles. The night battle was very interesting, filled with rams, sinks, and lights on

turret in the ram sink on Wednesday that was replaced. In the second sortie I started to notice that my stern gun interrupter was not retracting immediately and I could only fire about a round a second. But, I was good not to let this out and I still ended up with empty guns at the end of each sortie. In the afternoon was Campaign. This Campaign was very interesting, filled with sinks and controversy. Again the Moltke's job was to block targets. Along with Fluegel's help we kept 16 of 20 targets up. This was an even better performance than before and I thought I had done great in the Campaign on Tuesday. Mike M's Lutzow had its motor mounts go bad by the end of the Campaign. Unfortunately this put him out of all Friday's battle, which was the last battle of NATS. Thursday night was

very relaxing, just did a few tweaks to the Moltke and Mike T and I went out to a great dinner with a few of the “old school” captains. The dinner was filled with great stories and laughter. I learned this night that NATS is about eating.

I believe that on **Friday** we were running a little late as well, but this time it was not my fault. The Moltke again performed better than expected. It ran great and helped the Axis cause. It was great to end the week without a battle sink and not one 5 out of control. The highlight of Friday was the banquet at the USS Texas. We walked the boat, then ate dinner and got ready for the awards. All of the awards were distributed and I was greatly surprised to hear my name called for Rookie of the Year. I was hoping that I might have a chance, but did not think I would actually get it. I thought Mike Tanzillo had it for sure. I was very happy to get the award, but at the same time I felt that Mike T and Mike M deserved it as well. After the banquet we left back for the hotel, we were all very tired and wanted to rest up for the trip home.

Overall, as you can tell, NATS was the highlight of my Rookie season. I have become deeply involved in this hobby and I see myself getting into it more and more. I hope this recount of my rookie year has stirred up some good memories for people that were at NATS and maybe open the door to some people who are just ordering their first ship. This hobby is a good thing with great people involved, thanks to all who have helped along the way. See you on the water. ⚓



Bob H's cruiser does one on one

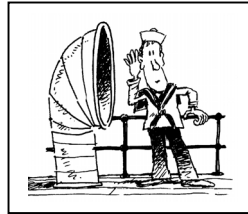
Photo by Chris Au

10 Things I Learned at my First NATS

by Bob Hoernemann

1. Just go

You have to go to NATS. If you have never been there you just can't



understand how much fun it is. I wanted to go to NATS as soon as I went to my first battle. But, after I had my ship built and went to some local battles I found out that I needed to work on my ship some more. That and my first child was born around NATS time so I could not go to the 2001 NATS. In the spring of 2002 it looked like no one from the local club was going to make it. But, I didn't care I was going. Driving 20+ hours by myself was not fun but the rest of the week was great.

2. Bring everything

I asked Ron & Larry what I would need for NATS. Everything, was the answer. You never know what is going to break or what someone else might need. As I looked around the pits I saw that all of the captains had moved their entire garage with them. Fortunately for me just about everything worked all week and one box of stuff never got out of the car.

3. Talk to everyone

I am a pretty outgoing person and did not think I would have trouble talking to people. The only thing that worried me was as the “New guy” that nobody knows I would have to start all of the conversations and maybe looked on as pushy or nosy. But, this group is very friendly and includes new people into the group very well. As soon as I got out of my car at the hotel Tom Jass (He must have seen me stretching) asked if I was one of those “Crazy ship guys”. We had a little chat and headed to the rooms. As I was unloading my car Kevin Bray introduced himself, this

made me feel real comfortable being at NATS.

4. The battles are huge

I was in the first battle on Monday and was in shock at how much stuff was going on at one time. The local battles I have been at have no more than 8 ships on the water, this was very different. It took until Tuesday for me to feel comfortable and Thursday before I felt good about being on the water. I can see how a rookie with a battleship would be in serious trouble.

5. Be patient

Tuesday morning I told Brain Lamb that I had a bad feeling about today, that I was going to sink. I woke up late, left the hotel without my controller (Did not get far before I turned around) made it to the pond and had forgotten my video camera. Went back for that, not a good morning. Everything was ok until campaign. I was in the second campaign and could not wait to get going. As soon as battle started I headed for the targets, where I found Jeff Lide. I was told that battleships don't shoot too much at cruisers in campaign (Right!) and started to hit targets. I knocked down 1, missed, 2 in a row, missed, 3 in a row, then I was rammed by a VDT. My ship almost sank on the way in with the large “Door” in its side. Since I wanted to get back on the water right away I took out my duck tape and patched up the hole (Standard practice locally). Jeff must have smelled the blood and chased me around until the tape started to peel off. Down she went, Doh! My campaign was over in 10 minutes because I didn't take time to fix my ship the right way.

6. Bow guns suck

I read online that the best way to set up a cruiser was with duel sterns, after I had a bow & stern gun set up. The bow gun seemed to work all right locally. We fight in a small pond so I can usually wait for

someone to make a turn and hit them from a safe distance. Not at NATS. I think the only time I hit anyone with my bow gun was when a Yamato pulled in front of me and did not move. I hit him with just about every shot and I don't think he noticed at all. That was 5 seconds of fun, but most of the week I was looking for bow shots that I could not find. If I did find them I maybe hit 1 out of 4.

7. Best 5 / Worst 5

Kevin Bray told me about this Monday night at dinner. We went around the table and told everyone our best and worst 5 seconds during the day. It was a great way to find out about things that happened during the day from other people. Some days there was a good battle story or how fellow battlers helped out each other during the day. I looked forward to the 5 & 5 every night. It was also nice to see the 5 & 5 on the e-mailing list after NATS.

8. Don't pick on the Vets

At the end of the Thursday campaign I had a full load of BB's, needed something to shoot at and found Jeff Lide. It was time for a little revenge for the Tuesday sink. Jeff was sitting still talking to someone on shore and I started hitting him with my bow gun. Jeff yells "Hey the Captain is trying to take a dip in the pool and you go and start shooting at him." With this the chase, and my most memorable part of NATS, began. My Cruiser was on her fifth campaign sortie and the batteries were getting weak so Jeff was able to run me down very easily. I tried running under the bridge only to find Charlie's Yamato. They managed to pin me next to the wall and hit me pretty hard. I made it out of there

and sat next to Chris Grossaint and Dana Graham this gave me some much needed time to pump out. But Jeff and Charlie were not done and hit me again before I could get up to (Slower) speed. This is when I used the last of my stern BB's and called Five. The stepped deck of my cruiser

was now almost under the water and I thought I would be taking a swim. Remembering the wisdom of Curly I stopped and let her pump. I'm not sure where my pursuers were but I could see the back end of my ship starting to rise out of the water. Back came Jeff and Charley to chase me

Nats 2002...by the Numbers

By Brian Eliassen

Back again for another year, despite my lack of attendance at Nats this year, is the now infamous *Nats By The Numbers* article! As always, the names have not been changed to protect the innocent. So here is a short list of interesting facts regarding the 2002 MWC Nationals which was held in Houston, TX. For comparison purposes (as well as fun), once again I've included last years results within parentheses

Total score for both the Allied and Axis fleets:	292,410 (277,345)
Difference between the final totals:	14, 660 (39,695)
Total number of battles:	15 (15)
Number of battles the Axis won:	1 (5)
Total number of sorties (both A/B):	25 (25)
Total number of sorties the Allies outnumbered the Axis:	1 (4)
Total number of sorties the Axis outnumbered the Allies:	20 (10)
Total number of sinks (including declares):	43 (39)
Total number of Axis sinks (including declares):	24 (27)
Number of ships that sank during speed testing on Sunday:	1
Number of times that one ship sank during speed testing:	3
Number of times the Bellerophon sank during speed testing:	0
Total number of ships participating in Night battle:	20 (15)
Total number of Allied ships participating in Night battle:	11 (7)
Total number of ships that sank during Night battle:	1 (1)
Total number of Allied ships that sank during Night battle:	1 (0)
Most recent three years in which Allies won Night Battle:	2002, 2001 & 1994
Total number of different captains who made it on the water:	48 (47)
Total number of different warship/captain combinations:	53 (51)
Number of people using more than one warship during the week:	5 (5)
Most popular ship class:	6 (6)
Number of class six ships:	16 (17)
Number of class six ships in Allied fleet:	13 (10)
Number of class seven ships:	4 (1)
Number of class seven ships in Allied fleet:	0 (0)
Least favorite ship class:	2 (2)
Number of class two ships:	2 (0)
Total number of North Carolina's:	6 (6)
Total number of Nagato's:	1 (3)
Total number of different ship classes used by the Allies:	12 (12)
Total number of different ship classes used by the Axis:	12 (16)
Number of people wanting to be the year 2003 Allied admiral:	1 (1)
Number of rule proposals on the ballot before Nats started:	4
Amount the MWC paid to have copies made of frivolous proposals:	\$20
Number of frivolous proposals that passed:	0
Percentage from previous year of total number of California captains attending:	-33% (3)

for the rest of my Five. I made it off without any more close calls. When I counted up my damage I more holes than the rest of the week total.

9. Vets have problems too

I thought only rookie ships broke down all the time. I was surprised to see a lot of vets have problems with all kinds of things. It kind of made me feel better that other people can't get everything to work at one time either. I also found a few vets who forgot the rules. Like the campaign committee member who almost forgot to take his ship out of the water at a base. Even though he was axis I reminded him about this little item and he corrected his mistake before he made it.

10. You need to battle as a team

On Thursday Matt Clarke and I teamed up on Jim Hill's Andrea Doria and with a little help from a So. Dak. sunk it in the first sortie (I remember hearing he was having pump problems which also helped).



Stuck in the Mud at Nats

Photo by Peter Kunisch

Then we went after Pete Kunisch's Andrea Doria in the rest of the first sortie and the second sortie. We chased him all over the pond. One ship cut him off while the other hit him, over and over again. It was a great time. Pete ended up with 99-21-13 and I'm sure most of the aboves (Maybe a few ons & belows too) were from us. This was my first time that I had fought with someone as a team for a long period of time and it worked out a lot better than I thought it would.



A 'Stuck' In The Mud

By Peter Kunisch

It was a gloomy and cloudy day in Texas,
The CD called for a vote, all said Yes,
we want to play with our ships
..... and it kept on raining.

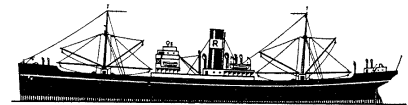
It was a drenching day in Texas,
guns are popping, Captains yelling
water on the grass, puddles on the sand
so much mud.....and it kept on raining.

It was a dripping day in Texas,
Captains sliding, Fluegel falling
ants were biting, the mud getting deeper
..... and it kept on raining.

It was a muddy day in Texas,
Captains were packing, cars departing
wheels were spinning, Captains pushing,
my RV was stuck! and it kept on raining.

It was a soggy day in Texas,
Steve was phoning, the AAA Truck arriving,
They were smiling, I was free
.....and the rain stopped.

The moral of the story;
"There is always a 'Stuck' in the Mud"



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War hath no fury like a non-combatant. - C.E. Montague