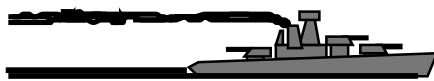
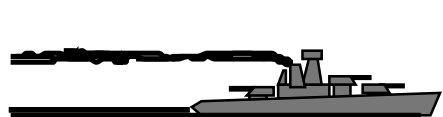


TASK FORCE 144



The Official Newsletter of Model Warship Combat, Inc.

www.mwci.org

Fall-2003



CALENDAR OF MWC EVENTS

November 22-23, 2003

Trotwood Turkey Shoot II

Trotwood Park, Oviedo, Florida

Site Host: Rick King

(See BOD addresses for contact info)

July 18-23, 2004

MWC National Championship

Rolla, Missouri

Site Host: Kevin Hovis

(See BOD addresses for contact info)

The MWC 2003 Early Birds Late Announcement!

The 2003 Early Bird Drawings, for early admissions for the club and for Nats, were done on time. The announcement is very late. The winner of the Prize from Battler's Connection for the early club entrance is Ron Horbul from Minnesota. The winner of the prize from Swampworks for the Early Nats Fee is Don Cole from Florida. Both winners received the hull of their choice.



Dana's new little cruiser.

OKAY, what's that in our scale?

According to NJM Campbells article "*Washington's Cherrytrees*" in Warship No 1, "an important matter which needed improvement in British ships was the capacity of the pumps, as those in the *Baden* could dispose of 8100 tons per hour outside the main machinery compartments, as against only 4450 tons per hour in the *Hood*...."

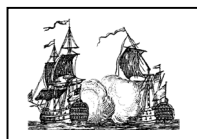


Combat Director Ted: That's not a sink. My pump's so good the level of the pond rises faster than my hull does..

Photo by Mike Melton's Brother

Nats 2003

The many questions and complexities of balance



The 2003 Nats is in the books. Every day had excellent battling.

THE FLEETS:

The Axis was the smaller fleet this year, like they are in most years. There were 20 captains conning 19 battleships or battlecruisers, and one cruiser as their main ships, with a total of 108 units. The Allies had 22 captains conning 20 battleships and 2 cruisers as their main ships, with a total of 111.5 units. Despite the closeness of these numbers, the Axis were feeling like underdogs

because the experience levels favored the Allied fleet.

Sunday: The ship testing went well, there were no sinks during speed trials. That evening, there was a bit of discussion on what the size of the various split fleets would be. The admirals had pledged to have balanced fleets but then the definition of what was 'balanced' caused a disagreement. It was decided that if the difference in the number of ships between a fleet's A and B fleet was three or less, that qualified as balanced.

Monday: The battling on Monday is very important, as it usually sets the tone for the whole week. The Axis fleet was trying a different strategy. As they had a fairly large contingent of smaller WWI battleships, they chose to group



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these ships into one fleet. Their fast battleships all went to the other fleet. It was their hope that by keeping their fleets grouped by similar speeds and turning abilities that they would be better able to maneuver as a cohesive unit and be able to frustrate the mixed Allied fleets. However, due to a frequency conflict, one of the fast Axis battleships sailed with the slow fleet, and was accompanied by the lone Axis cruiser.

Fleet Battle 1: The Axis slow fleet started off facing the tough nuts of the Allied A fleet. They lost three ships in the first sortie. Tim Krakowski lost radio control on his *Fuso* and she started circling and getting blasted by triples until Tim declared his ship sunk. Jeff Lipp's *Baden* went dead in the water and also got blasted and prop washed until she vanished. Luis Gomez's cruiser went down with light damage. Two more Axis were sunk in the second sortie. Four Allied fast boats hounded John Bruder's *Vittorio Veneto*, until she sank, and Alan Oster's *Konig* sank near the far shore with high damage. No one sank on the Allied side, as Lars didn't make this battle. The Allies won this battle easily, 21,665 to 8315.

The Axis fast fleet did much better against the Allied B fleet, which was no slouch either. The first sortie started with the Contest Director, an Allied member, losing radio control and his ship sailed for minutes in a circle before

the non-pumping ship slid under the waves. The Axis gave a bonzai cheer. "We aim to please," said Ted just before his head went under and his straw hat floated off, as he recovered his ship from the bottom. Before the sortie was over, his wingman, Bob Hoernemann, who'd promised to 'follow his wingman everywhere', had his *Warspite* follow him to the bottom. These sinks were balanced by the loss of Rick King's *Scharnhorst* in the first sortie, and Jeff Lide's *Kirishima* in the second. Jeff was given partial credit for his own sink, as he zoned in on punishing Grant Dahl's I-boat. Grant was shooting back but Jeff was mauling him, but Jeff forgot to watch his own waterline and turn on his pump until it was too late to recover. "OH NO!!" was the cry as the *Kirishima's* stern went under.

At the end of the battle, the Axis seemed to control the waves, as the Allies were out of ammo. Brian Lamb's *Colorado* was the subject of a lengthy chase as the dreadnought was pumping steadily. She was a proved to be a tough nut, and the subject of a speed test afterwards, but passed both trials easily.

The Axis fleet scored enough to take the battle, at 13,010 to 8450, but not enough to make up the difference in the combined score.

Monday Afternoon:

Allied A fleet vs. Axis Fast Fleet.
This battle started with the usual Stern to



A good sink deserves a 'tip of the hat'.

Photo by Chris Pearce

Stern faceoff, which held up for a few minutes before the formations broke up. About half of the Axis captains moved to the far side of the pond. Charley and Tony Stephens stayed on the near shore and faced off with the Au brothers, among others, like Mike Melton's *Arizona*. Lars' *Bellerophon* wandered in and got chewed up and took a nasty list, but was able to escape without pursuit. The first sortie ended with the Axis trying to entice the Allies to the far side, and being refused.

The second sortie was much the same. The group of Axis captains on the far side grew slightly. Charley and Tony Stephens stayed on the near shore and battled their *Nagatos* against the Au brothers again. Meanwhile the *Scharnhorsts* and the other fast Jap ships tried to entice the Allied ships to fight on the far side at the Axis' feet. After Tony and Charley's *Nagatos* sank, the Allies played with the idea, as ships darted in and out, but no serious sorties were attempted. Tim Beckett was heard continually calling, "Allies stay over here!" Later the fast Italians went on a run back and forth, chased by a slew of North Carolinas, but soon returned to the fold. Finally when some of the Axis called five and started to dump their ammo, Jeff Lide's *Kirishima* sent a

series of splashes flying twice the height of his superstructure

The Allies won this battle 16940 to 9125.

Allied B fleet vs Axis Slow fleet. The Axis Slow Fleet suffered from attrition in this battle. After fielding 9 ships in the mornings battle, they were down to six at the start of the afternoon. John Bruder had gone to the fast fleet due to the lone frequency conflict. Alan Oster and Luis Gomez's ships were on the bench. Jeff Lipp's lightly damaged *Baden* went down early in the first sortie, with Ted Brogden's "It's not the *QE* it's the *Valiant*!" standing alongside. Tim Krakowski's *Fuso* was shook loose from the small Axis fold, and the small Axis contingent started chanting "*Fuso* come back. *Fuso* come back." *Fuso* eventually returned. Meanwhile the other Axis fought the defensive battle in a small, self-supporting group. As the ammo ran low, the *Fuso* was separated again, and a pair of *SoDaks* and Ted's *Valiant* ran him until he sank again.

In the second sortie, Grant Dahl's *Indomitable* seemed to get hung up on shore, and attracted a lot of attention. The Axis punished him while they themselves were punished. There were no sinks, but Grant and Fluegel were

both very close. Someone started singing, "Auf Wiedersehen" as the hard pumping *Baden* got very low in the water but just then Fluegel's timer sounded and Fluegel said, "No Thanks," and reached down and tapped his ship.

The Allies won this battle 11,445 to 8315.

Tuesday:

The Allies would flip-flop their fleets on Tuesday and Thursday, but as the makeup of the fleets remained the same, we'll refer to them as they were designated on Monday. As for the Axis, they slightly modified their fleets. David Asman took his WWI AC *Scharnhorst* to the fast fleet, while Mike Tanzillo (*Scharnhorst*) and Bryan Finster (*Nagato*) went to join the slow fleet.

Fleet Battle 3: The Allied A fleet faced off with the fast Axis again. They got a gift early on when Lars' *Bellerophon* started sailing in circles with a faulty battery. Driven into shore, the impotent dreadnought was soon settling on the bottom. Midway through the sortie the Axis started losing ships. Tom Melton's *Nagato* sank on the far shore. Jeff Lide's *Kirishima* was the center of a lot of attention, and sank at his own feet after a lengthy battle. The Au's and the Stephens brothers squared off again. The slugging match, which



When a ship's aground, the others come 'round.

Photo by Mike Melton's Brother



The *Fuso* makes a break for the open waters, but the Allied B Fleet decided that ‘no one should go out alone.’

Photo by Chris Pearce

seemed to go on all week, had people shaking their heads in wonder all week. The Axis duo came up short this time, with both Tony and Charley sinking in the first sortie. During one of the sinks, one of the ships was bumped just as she was going under, and Bob H’s video was

used to check if a ram penalty would be assessed (it wasn’t.) Finally, Chris Pearce’s *NC* was sunk in return, but the sink wasn’t captured on tape.

The second sortie had the fast ships running. Josh Bruder, among others, was walking the far shore while being

chased by a squadron of *North Carolinas*. His father was in a similar situation. Chris Kessler spent some time trying to shoot and block the fast Italians and got several cat calls in response. Rick King’s *Scharnhorst* was sunk, but not on tape. This may be the battle



The Axis Slow Fleet stern gunnin’ not runnin’ crew try to back up their boasts with their boats.

Photo by Mike Melton’s Brother



The *North Carolinas* during a quiet moment, along with the *Malaya*.

Photo by Joel Goodman

where he was nearly off his five, and the Allied fast ships had been left in the dust, and he sank suddenly with less than twenty seconds on his timer. Lou Meszaros' *VV* also was sunk in second sortie. The Allies won this battle 18245 to 9340.

The Allied B Fleet faced the Axis Slow Fleet. The Axis had bolstered the slow fleet with Finster's *Nagato* and Mike Tanzillo's *Scharnhorst*, while David Asman's WWI SMS *Scharnhorst* had gone to the fast fleet. The battle started with the Axis in a cluster, and Jeff Lipp's *Baden* looked in tough shape early but recovered. The Axis stood up well, until most of the Axis had called five, then Alan Oster's *Konig* was cut from the herd and finally sunk after a long chase, with lengthy portions of it done in reverse. It looked on the video like Alan turned off the pump a few moments before the sink.

The second sortie had a strange one for Ted Brogden. While moving up to block Mike Tanzillo's *Scharnhorst* from escaping from himself and Brian Lamb's *Colorado*, the *Scharnhorst*'s bow caught the *Valiant*'s bow and the *Colorado*'s bow caught the *Valiant*'s stern. Together, the two ships pushed the *Valiant* over and sideways for several feet. When they backed off, the *Valiant* swung back drunkenly, full of water.

Very close to sinking, the *Valiant* had to pump out before resuming the battle.

Later, Ty Supanic's *Invincible* sank, out in the middle. Ty stripped down, then dove headfirst in the water towards his ship. But when he resurfaced it was like he'd done a summersault under the water. "Dang," he said, as he started searching the bottom at his feet, far from where his boat went down. Seems that his head-first dive had knocked his prescription glasses off and they too were now on the bottom. After finding them, he returned for his ship, which he couldn't find now. Don Cole and Joel Goodman were waiting impatiently for

him, as they had been chasing a damaged Axis (probably Jeff Lipp's *Baden*). Finally Ty came out without his ship so that Don and Joel could finish off the sink.

Bill Harvard, a rookie with an *Invincible*, had made it out onto the water for this battle. For his efforts he attracted the attention of the Axis Admiral, Bryan Finster, who started perforating Bill's hull. Lars directed his sons Grant and Andy to come help out their fellow I-boat, and come they did. Except somehow Andy concentrated so much on Finster that he sailed his *Inflexible* directly into Bill's now dead-in-the-

water ship. Bill sank soon afterwards. Finster, after punishing the rookie, came over after the battle and patched many of the 98 holes while coaching Bill on post-sink systems check-outs.

The Allies won this battle 11205 to 8200.

Campaign 1: If controversies happen at Nats, they usually happen during campaign. The first campaign had the Allied A fleet facing the Axis slow fleet. The battle started with the all the Axis battleships knocking down the undefended Allied targets, all, except one, that is. One of the Axis ships was floating dead in the water and the



The cruisers had more time to sparkle at this Nats

Photo by Chris Pearce

controversy was whether it was 'on the water' when campaign started, and whether it correctly 'floated into port' when it's five out of control expired. If that had been the main controversy, we would have been lucky. After downing the Allied targets, the Axis battleships sailed down next to the Allied home port. When the Allies didn't launch any convoy ships, the Axis ships started calling five and dumping their ammo. Confused by the Axis tactics, the Allies tried to take advantage of this unexpected tactic by launching every convoy ship it could, even Dana Graham's PT boat. The *Olympic* ran, Bob H's CVL, Joel Goodman's ship, and three LST's all ended up on the water, sailing away from the Axis ships counting down their fives. As the Allied convoy captains reached their forward port, a cheer came from the Axis back down at the other end of the pond. Luis Gomez had intentionally sunk his cruiser, for an unseaworthy sink. The Axis Slow Fleet had withdrawn from battle, as no Axis warship remained to go on the water. The boatload of Allied points, sitting on the water in the convoy ships, did not count. The CD declared the battle over. Allies win 7499 to 2496.

For the second Campaign battle, the Allied fleet decided to use a similar tactic. However, instead of bringing their warships off the water, they never launched any, instead starting the campaign with just a convoy ship on the water, which was quickly called over for no Allied ship being on the water.

The Axis won the second campaign 6899 to 2500.

The reason for the Axis surrender in the first campaign was explained as being 'the only way we could win' as they did not want the Allies running up a big score against their slow fleet. The Allied response in the second sortie, which some of the Axis viewed only as being done in

spite, was done mainly for the same reason, as the Axis had scored big in the campaign battles the year before, and the Allied Admiral was worried about a repeat. As it was, the Axis won the combined battle by only a couple hundred points.

Needless to say, many battlers, having spent time, money and a lot of sweat to come to Perry to battle, and then not battling, did not think much of the tactics. A few left for the motel, frustrated by the afternoon's events.

For those that stayed, several pickup battles were soon in action. A 'Cruiser-Only' battle took place that had several battleship captains shaking their heads in amazement and questioning their previous opinions on the smaller ships.

In a reverse of the fleet battles so far, the Allied 26 second battleships took on a fleet of fast Axis ships and Randy Stiponovich's *VDT*, sinking Bob Hoernemann's *Warspite* after a long pummeling.

In another battle that had about a dozen ships, a mix of *VDT*'s and *VV*'s mixed it up with the *Lion*, a gaggle of I-boats, and a *SoDak*. Ty Supanic spent his five running around and saying "Thank you" to several teammates who

cut off his pursuit.

"The pickup battles saved the day," more than one captain said later.

Wednesday:

As usual, there were several pickup battles and one-on-ones out at the pond. The Bruders were there, Tim Beckett, Chris Au, Chris Pearce, the Dahl boys, and others battled during the afternoon.

Night Battle: Night battle found eleven Allied battlers (Chris & Dave Au, Mike Melton, Tim Beckett, Chris Pearce, Ron Horbul, Bob Hoernemann, Chriss Grossaint, Ty Supanic, Brain Lamb, and Kevin Bray) hitting the water. The Axis fielded ten battlers (Jeff Lide, John and Josh Bruder, Lief Goodson, Fluegel, Rick King, Mike Tanzillo, Kevin Hovis, Luis Gomez, and Bryan Finster) to face them. For some reason Kevin Bray's *Massachusetts* went down early with light damage (5-2-1). This received many 'bonzais' from the Axis. As usual, there was mass confusion as well. Bob Hoernemann found his *Warspite* being mistaken for Jeff Lide's *Kirishima*. Seem Bob's white polar bear head on the superstructure was mistaken for the white range finder on Jeff's ship by the Allies. But to even things up, several Axis made the same mistake and let Bob



Minnesota Bob's *Warspite* and Jeff Lide's *Kirishima*. The white objects on the superstructures would be confused during night battle.

Photo by Mike Melton's Brother

shoot at them. Scorewise, three Axis, Fluegel's *Baden* and the two *Scharnhorsts*, each took more than 1300 points of damage, while only Dave Au's *Revenge* racked up as many. The Allies won the battle 6245 to 5870.

Thursday:

The Axis fleet abandoned the Fast/Slow fleet concept, and went with a more standard mix of fast and slow ships. The Allied fleets remained the same.

Fleet Battle 4: The Allied A Fleet faced the Axis Mixed Fleet (#1) of Meszaros(*VV*), Asman(*Nassau*), Stiponovich(*Agano*), T.Melton(*Nagato*), King(*Scharnhorst*), Finster(*Nagato*), Roe(*Scharnhorst*), John Bruder(*Italia*), Lide(*Kirishima*), and Fluegel(*Baden*).

The Axis started this battle clustered on the corner where the pond bends, no doubt trying to make it difficult for the Allies by standing on the corner and making the Allies jump back and forth behind them as the battle shifted. The Allies spent most of the first sortie picking on Fluegel, and from his scoresheet (129-30-28) it looks like he took most of their bbs to the bottom with his *Baden*. Lou Meszaros's *VV* was declared sunk. Tom Melton's *Nagato* also ran afoul of the Allies and was sunk. Jeff Lipp's *Baden* was also seen sinking, her bow rising as she ran for the shore.

The Allies, in return, lost Lars. Lars's ship was finally sailing on an even keel, at least until he sailed between the battling Au's and the three big Jap boats of Finster, Lide and Melton.

In the second sortie the Allies resumed the pursuit of selected individuals. John Bruder's *Italia* was chased by three *NCs* and the *Malaya*, and survived. After he came off the water, his pursuers joined the group chasing Jeff Lide's *Kirishima*. Jeff's ship was getting pounded (he took even more hits than Fluegel did), and a large, quarter sized chunk of his hull was dragging in the water. As Jeff's ship finally headed to shore to sink at her captain's feet, Fluegel quipped, "You were doing fine when there were only three of them..."

The Allies won this battle 18955 to 8840.

The Allied B Fleet faced the Axis Mixed Fleet #2 of Tony & Charley Stephens(*Nagatos*), Alan Oster(*Konig*),



The Superlative (or Super-less?) *Colorado* of Brian Lamb.

Photo by Mike Melton's Brother

Hovis(*Bismarck*), Gomez(*Garibaldi*), Tanzillo(*Scharnhorst*), Goodson(*VDT*), and Krakowski(*Fuso*).

This battle was a very close match, basically being a stalemate. Things just didn't look right for the Allies as Brian Lamb's *Colorado* either launched without it's main superstructure, or lost it early on. Then later Kevin Bray's *Massachusetts* sank again with light damage.

The *Warspite* and the *Fuso* mixed it up for a time. Then the action shifted to the *Colorado*, which had gotten stuck on the beach. Brian Lamb was trying his ship to get back off the mud, but Lief Goodson maneuvered his *VDT* behind the *Colorado*'s stern to keep him there while Lief called for more help. The *Warspite* and a *SoDak* came to rescue Brian, and as a result the frustrated Axis pummeled the *Warspite* for a while.

Late in the first sortie, Andy Dahl's I-boat lost partial rudder control and could only turn to the left. Despite the calls to attack, the I-boat escaped with light damage.

In the second sortie, the *Colorado*'s superstructure made a reappearance. Kevin Hovis' *Bismarck* sank early on (see his article on the how and why). Mike Tanzillo was a main target of

the Don Cole and Joel Goodman, and was eventually sunk. In return, Ty Supancic's I-boat sank near the far shore again. For his efforts, Ty got his picture on the front page of the local paper the next morning.

The Axis won this one, a real squeaker, 10590 to 10585.

Campaign 2: The Allied B fleet faced off with the Axis Mixed Fleet #2. This battle was a little more closer to the standard script. The Axis launched convoy ships, and so did the Allies. The Axis were sailing a squadron of Jap convoy ships, along with their German tankers, all of them being roughly the same size. The Allies countered with the Bigs (two *Olympics*), the Tinies (a troop of LSTs and a PT boat), and the Conventionals (a CVL, a CVE, and the best of scale Liberty).



The Allied CVL is escorted by Ty Supancic's superlative rookie I-boat.

Photo by Chris Pearce

The standard script had each side running convoy ships, the Axis attacking shore targets, and the Allies ignoring

who was dead in the water. At the end of the battle he was one tuckered fellow, but he had a big smile.

In the second campaign, a storm was brewing in the distance, off to the south. Most battlers thought we were in for a



The Axis Flower Pot Run.

Photo by Mike Melton's Brother

them. As far as standard scripts go, that was it. For one of their convoy runs, the Axis launched the *Altmark* with a flower pot on board. Jeff Lide had brought a gross of these little doozies, all with plastic plants and emblazoned with "Happy Nats" on the side, and one of the buggers had found itself placed on board. A mix of cheers and moans arose when the flower pot was shattered by a shot about 2/3 of the way through the *Altmark's* forward run. The *Altmark* was soon shattered and sinking on the shoreline as well.

On the other side, the Allies were launching their *Olympics* with LST escorts. The Axis were ignoring the LSTs, interested instead in punishing the big, point-filled ships. Any time the Axis sidemounts got close to the big ships, the LST would 'bump' the attacker, who then by rule had to withdraw to shore for thirty seconds.

The Axis, in another change in the script, spent the slow moments in the battle, seeking out isolated targets. First Ted Brogden's *Valiant* was targeted and sunk. Doug Hunt's cruiser was also corralled and put under.

For the Allies, Don Cole was everywhere. Between shooting up Axis convoy ships, his *Alabama* brought in a convoy ship that couldn't sail into the wind unaided. He performed another long tugboat job, bringing in a teammate

In the end, it was a very close battle, which the Allies won 13800 to 13699. Maybe the big question should be how the Axis ended up with that odd number of points. Did someone get penalized one point?

soaking, but the battle was started anyhow. Tim Beckett was wearing a big, dark raincoat, and looked like Darth Vader without the helmet, stalking up and down the shoreline. But the storm skittered off to the east and other than a



Another Axis convoy run, Mike Melton's *Arizona* lowers the boom.

Photo by Mike Melton's Brother

few wayward drops and some high winds we were left unscathed.

The Allies continued with their David and Goliath teaming of *Oly's* and LSTs. One *Olympic* nearly made a complete run, the high winds buffeting it out of position as it waited for the final minute before trying to sail into port, and then being unable to get turned properly with the winds and its hull filling with water. The second *Olympic* made it

warships in return, losing the light cruisers *Karlsruhe* (Fluegel) and *Agano* (Stiponivich), and John Bruder's *Italia*. And finally, the Best of Scale Convoy ship made a trip under to show off in Davy Jones' locker.

The score in this one wasn't as close, but it didn't seem to be that much different from the first. The Allies won 13800 to 6951.

Friday: With the article in the local

"It don't matter, sink him," instructed Fluegel.

Then when the *Kirishima* finally went down, Jeff could be heard saying "It never happened, it never happened." He spoke the truth, his score sheet was lost, so 'it never happened'.

In the second sortie, the battling continued hot and heavy between the *SoDaks* and the Axis fast boats, and Don Cole was after everybody, and at one

point, Fluegel was his main target and quipped "If I could get some help, I wouldn't be sinking." But eventually Don's *Alabama* succumbed, rolling slowly to the side and sinking to many Axis cheers. And just as unexpected, Ted's *Valiant*, which had looked very wounded in the first sortie, was out there late in the sortie, working over Tom Melton's *Nagato* along with Brian Lamb.

The Axis won this one 13420 to 8030.

Allied A Fleet faced the Axis Mixed Fleet #2 in the second battle. The battle started in the usual fashion, the Axis in a cluster just off the point. The Allied slow boats started off facing them



The campaigns saw a higher number of warship sinks than normal. The *Fuso* savors a *Valiant* sink.

Photo by Mike Melton's Brother.

however.

The Axis, in an unusual move, used their *Scharnhorsts* to knock down the Axis targets. Mark Roe seemed to get most of them, while Rick King cleaned up the rest.

In another unexpected move, Fluegel took his convoy ship and sailed along the far shore as he walked alongside it, on the far shore. It didn't help, his convoy ship was sunk.

Some of the Jap convoy ships sailed with escorts, and some didn't. There were so many that some of them must've gotten through. Mike Melton's *Arizona* was in among those ships attacking the convoys, and then got caught and punished himself. Finally escaping and counting down his five, he sailed for the Allied port, only to run into another group coming around the point. He was sunk with about thirty seconds to go.

There were more warship sinkings. Chris Grossaint's *Brooklyn* was pinned and sunk. But the Axis lost three

paper, and the encroaching horse trailers, we were prepared for spectators, but the incident with the cowboy on the four-wheeler caught us by surprise.

Fleet Battle 5:

Friday started with the Allied B Fleet taking on the Mixed Axis Fleet #1. With the issue decide, the combatants were a little more relaxed. Don Cole set the tone for the battle by sailing through the middle of the Axis defensive circle. Ty Supancic, whose picture had graced the front page of the morning's paper, was an obvious target. "Get the Media Boy," was the cry. He put up a good fight and sank out in the deep water again.

The other Allied sink in the first sortie was Bob Hoernemann's *Warspite*, which went down due to pump problems. Ted Brogden's *Valiant* got very low in the water not once but twice, and looked lucky to escape.

On the other side, Jeff Lide was getting punished again, at one point hollering "Ow! Ow!".

down with their stern guns while the Allied Fast boats sailed around them to put the pincers on them. So it was the Au brothers facing off the Stephens brothers stern to stern once again, and the battling was hot and heavy. The NCs culled the *Fuso* out from the Axis herd once again, but Charley called him back. However, the *Fuso* succumbed later with relatively light damage, but then she'd had a very hard week. Another ship that was every where was Leif Goodson's *VDT*. He was chewing up NCs and the *Malaya*, and swooping through the thick of the battle here and there. After a very lengthy battle his ship finally slowed and rolled on its side as it went down.

In other action, Ron Horbul's *Lion* found itself the target of three Axis fast ships, but he survived. In the middle of the furball Lars' *Bellerophon* was trying to spar with Alan Oster's *Konig* while the two of them had to interrupt their battles as other ships darted through the middle. And out on the fringes

somewhere Dana Graham's *Prince of Wales* was sunk with very light damage.

In the second sortie the heavy battling continued. The Au brothers chased Josh Bruder's *VV* for a time, but the *VV* lasted out its five.

Mike Melton's *Arizona* started working over Mike Tanzillo's *Scharnhorst*, and was soon joined by the *Malaya* to add to the carnage. The *Nagatos* and the *Konig* came to his rescue, but the *Scharnhorst* slid under the waves anyway.

Meanwhile, the *Bellerophon*, which had been sparring again with the *Konig*, was pumping heavily and thus didn't want to move around much as the battle moved away from her. Then Luis Gomez's *Garibaldi* started sniping at the *Bell* just as the *Bell* was joined by Ron Horbul's *Lion*. "Let's go sink us a cruiser," said Ron, and Lars agreed.

The cruiser didn't run, and the *Bell*'s bow gun was scoring on the cruiser while the *Lion* tried to circle to the outside. Then the cruiser went out of range of the *Bell* and Lars moved her out after after the Axis cruiser. Lars was busy trying to see if his bow gun was hitting the cruiser when Luis said, "Whoa! BONZAI!"

The *Bell*'s movements had overpowered her own pump and the impotent dreadnought had gone down

again. "Thanks, Ron," said Lars with a wry grin while Ron laughed and chuckled.

Not long after that, Bill Harvard's I-boat, which had made it back finally after his battle on Tuesday, was sunk again.

Finally, the Stephens brothers were still battling, but there weren't many remaining Axis teammates to help and so they were virtually surrounded. "She might go down, but she's going down fighting," said Tony. He spoke the truth.

Then when it was just Charley left, he faced off three *NCs*, the Au brothers, and the *Lion* at the end. He was sunk as well, but it was an excellent fight.

After Charley went down, the cry went up, "Where's the *Garibaldi*?!"

In sort of a mirror of the week, the Allies won this battle 18370 to 14710. The final score for the week had the Allies winning 187734 to 139780.



The Stephen brothers *Nagatos* fought hard all week.



The *Warspite* sinks during Friday's Flowery ending.

Photos by Mike Melton's Brother. Tom



Being someone who loves numbers (Must come from my love of baseball) I was wondering how many of my BBs should hit their target. I had just built my first battleship and was battling against Andy & Grant Dahl in a 2 on 1. We did this battle three different weekends. After the first weekend I was very disappointed in the performance of my ship and my marksmanship. I was only hitting with 8.5% of my shots and thought I should be at 40-50%. My ship and marksmanship did get better, after the third battle my hits were at 19.8%. But I still thought that I should be a lot higher. So, I found the scores Steve R. had sent me for 2002 and started to look at them and figure out the hit percentage for each fleet. I was surprised at what I found. The total hit percentage was only 14.9%.

Now you have to know that I had to do some guess work to get to that number. I took the units for the ships and subtracted 1 unit for each ship's pump. Then I took that number as the Gun Units and multiplied it by 100 to get the total BBs that could be shot. Then I added up the number of holes and divided. I'm sure some of the ships had a 1/2 unit pump, so this means I have a few too many BBs in the calculations already. I also did not have the info on who sunk in the first sortie and I did not have the number of BBs left in captain's guns at the end of each sortie. This gives me even more BBs that did not get shot and should not be

part of the hit percentage. So, I guessed that for every 100 BBs that could get shot only 75 did get shot. As you can see the Allies had an 18.4% rate and the Axis had an 11.8% rate. The best battle was by one fleet was 20.5%. Night battle was 3.7% for the Axis and 5.6% for the Allied.

The Allied fleet only improved 1% but the Axis fleet was up 6%. All of the Axis 2002 rookies must have improved their shooting in their new battleships. I also think the fast/slow fleet set up let the slow ships get in more shots and not come off the water with lots of BBs in their guns. The total holes for the Allied

2002

AXIS TOTALS WITH 75 BBs PER BATTLE PER GUN

AXIS GUN UNITS	ALLIED HOLES			AXIS BBs	HITS	%
524	3235	419	993	39300	4647	11.8%

ALLIED TOTALS WITH 75 BBs PER BATTLE PER GUN

ALLIED GUN UNITS	AXIS HOLES			ALLIED BBs	HITS	%
451.5	4836	507	892	33863	6235	18.4%

TOTALS WITH 75 BBs PER BATTLE PER GUN

GUNS UNITS	HOLES			BBs	HITS	%
975.5	8071	926	1885	73163	10882	14.9%

MAIN WARSHIPS

2002				2003			
CLASS	NUMBER OF SHIPS			CLASS	NUMBER OF SHIPS		
	ALLIED	AXIS	TOTAL		ALLIED	AXIS	TOTAL
2	2	0	2	2	0	0	0
3	4	4	8	3	2	1	3
4	2	9	11	4	6	4	10
5	1	6	7	5	6	7	13
6	13	3	16	6	8	8	16
7	0	4	4	7	0	0	0
			48				42

Of course this peaked my curiosity and I got the scores from Tim K. for 2003. This data was a little bit more accurate as I had information on who sunk in the first sortie. I do not think that there were any ships that had a 1/2 unit pumps this year. I thought that there was more damage at NATS this year. In 2002 the ships were spread all over the big pond and there were separate battles in the little pond. In Perry the battling seemed to be closer to shore and in a smaller area, until the chasing started. I thought that the hit percentages would be higher this year, and they were.

fleet were close to the same as last year, but the Axis saw a big drop in aboves and a big increase in belows and ons. This would seem to follow the change in the type of ships at this year's NATS for the Allies. They had only two cruisers this year and six last year and had more "Haymaker" ships in 2003, 6 vs 1.

This year the best fleet percentage was Monday afternoon the Axis slow fleet with 22.7%. The worst fleet battle was the Axis fast fleet Monday afternoon at 8.3%. Night battle was 14.3% almost a 10% increase!

The one on one and small fleet

2003						
AXIS TOTALS WITH 75 BBs PER BATTLE PER GUN						
AXIS GUN UNITS	ALLIED HOLES			AXIS BBs	HITS	%
370.75	3516	447	974	27806	4937	17.8%
ALLIED TOTALS WITH 75 BBs PER BATTLE PER GUN						
ALLIED GUN UNITS	AXIS HOLES			ALLIED BBs	HITS	%
429	4441	607	1191	32175	6239	19.4%
TOTALS WITH 75 BBs PER BATTLE PER GUN						
GUNS UNITS	HOLES			BBs	HITS	%
799.75	7957	1054	2165	59981	11176	18.6%

battles fell a little below the rest of the scoring at 13.7%. Though Tim B. and Chris A. hit 31.2% against Chris P., Andy & Grant Dahl, of course both Andy & Grant sank with a lot of damage. Just looking at these two NATS it seems that an average battler will hit 16.8% of the time. So keep track of your hit percentage and see if you improve, over time you should.

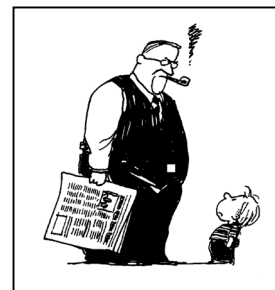
Now for some useless

battle goes to Jeff Lide 203/17/13 or 233 total. Fluegel had the most ons in a battle and Tony Stephens had the most belows 36. The battlers with the most damage that did not sink are Chris Au 87/33/14 and Lief Goodson 89/29/15. Lief did sink later in the week with 99/18/15, must be the quality and not the quantity. We all remember Jeff Lide's sink when he forgot to turn on his pump, but he had a lot of damage compared to

GEEZER-CODGER'S QUESTION?

by Bart Purvis

To see old friends, after a two-year hiatus, was great. To meet new friends was absolutely wonderful.



My thanks to all who helped me in my enjoyment of this year's Nats. Although I didn't bring a ship Joel Goodman allowed me to con his best of scale convoy ship on Tuesday afternoon and I had, to put it simply, a ball. It was a most enjoyable and interesting




Jeff Lide's Battered Jap battlecruiser.

photo by Mike Melton's brother

information you can use to confuse your wife. Most of you know that Fluegel was the most damaged (13,130), but did you know that Dave Au was the most damaged Allied (10,730) and never sank? Not only was Fluegel the most damaged but he also had the most patching to do 438/86/114 for a total of 638 holes. Don Cole was the Allied that sniffed the most dope fumes 400/34/79 for a total of 513. The two battlers with the most free time during NATS were Chris Kessler 41/17/9 67 total and Luis Gomez 16/2/6 24 total. The Axis with the most aboves are Fluegel and Jeff Lide 438, ons: Fluegel 86 and belows: Randy Stiponovich 118. The Allies had Don Cole 400 aboves, Brian Lamb 57 ons and Dave Au 145 belows. The prize for most holes (And aboves) in one

Kevin Bray who sunk during night battle with 5/2/1. Out of 46 sinks (Fleet battles only) 26 of them were in the first sortie. Eight warships sank in campaign battles this year. Andy & Grant Dahl took more damage in the two small fleet battles they did on Wednesday than the entire rest of the week: Andy 122/15/17 154 week vs 132/17/41 190 Wednesday, Grant 114/20/68 202 week vs 153/26/24 203 Wednesday. Josh Bruder beat his dad John 55/5/26 vs 23/4/3 and Tom Melton beat his brother Mike 21/2/15 vs 9/1/0 in one on one battles.

by Bob Hoernemann 



week for me. Thanks to all of the attendees for making it so.

I have seen several opinions on the Internet about how we should balance fleets and insure that everyone has opportunity to battle. Many ideas have been bandied about. Balancing fleets according to ship numbers, units, speed, captains, capabilities have been mentioned. This rule or that rule has been proposed. BOD involvement has been suggested. Are we perhaps trying to reinvent the airplane? We don't have this type of problem at our regional battles. Of course, if the fleets are fairly even we like to battle Axis/Allied even at regional battles. But if this type of split would be grossly uneven what happens? Why the two admirals sit down together and choose two fleets that are

relatively evenly matched in as many ways as possible. So my question is: Can't we follow a similar process at Nats? Yes, Nats is ALWAYS Axis/Allied, but why not let the admirals sit down together on Sunday and attempt to relatively evenly match their A and B fleets? Their objective, at this point, would not be scheming a winning strategy, but trying to insure that all captains would have opportunity to put their ship alongside that of the enemy in mortal combat--in other words for everyone to have maximum opportunity for fun. As things are now the admiral can have fleet A be all ships except for the three 22 second cruisers in B fleet. This is an extreme, but a similar scenario has been played out before, for real. And it is not fun to see a fleet empty most of their ammo in the water after the battle is over.

Let's give our admirals an additional duty. Let's have them get together and balance the fleets as best they can on Sunday so that all captains can have a reasonable chance to do exactly what they have come to Nats to do--battle. And then, on Monday morning, the admirals can begin to utilize all of the strategic and tactical cunning at their disposal to give their captains the victory at Friday's end.

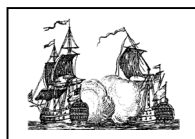
Gentlemen, please remember that our primary objective at these shindigs is not to win, but to have fun. If we achieve this objective then there are no losers. We will all win, although one fleet's captains will most likely get a tad wetter.



Fuso Points the way photo by Chris P.

The Longest Five

by Kevin Hovis



Thinking back on this past Nats, I'd have to say, overall, I had a very good time. Also thinking about the battling my ship was in, the LONGEST five minutes I've ever experienced in my life happened during Thursday's fleet battle.

It begins during the first sortie. The *Bismarck* did well attacking the Allied slow fleet in its humble kapitan's opinion. I helped put a few holes into the Allied Admiral along with trading shots with Don Cole, Joel Goodman and Ted Brogden. I lasted out the sortie and only called five after emptying the stern guns and forward sidemounts with only a few extra rounds left in the haymaker, taking 24-1-3 for damage.

Fast-forward to five minutes before the start of sortie two. Most of the Axis fleet was putting ships into the water. No one was heavily damaged except possibly the *Scharnhorst* and *Fuso*. I put the *Bismarck* on the water and ran it a little to test the systems. I also cycled the pump a few times. As noted above, there were only three belows in the ship, so the water coming in wasn't great and the pump would go dry pretty quickly. As the *Bismarck* and its wingman waited for the countdown to battle to go to zero, more ships, both Axis and Allied, entered the water and made ready for battle. About every minute or so, I would cycle the pump to rid it of what little water was coming in.

Ted Brogden called for battle to begin. I cycled the pump just about at the same moment and nothing happened! For about thirty seconds, I again tried to cycle the pump, leaving it off for a short time to see if it could be a priming problem. Nothing worked. I decided to call five out of control and go hide. Fortunately for me, a big furball was surrounding Mike Tanzillo and Tim Krakowski while I was on the

outside edges facing towards the right end of the pond. I ran up into the right end and waited out my five next to the campaign target.

While there, I continued to cycle the pump. Since I was close enough, I could listen for the pump motor and heard absolutely nothing! I figured it would be close to surviving out my five, but was worried the run to my hiding place had pumped in quite a bit of water. As I sat there sweating out the five, I worried that some Allied captains would find out what was up and come in to attack. That furball seemed to get closer to the point of shore every second! Luis Gomez brought his *Garibaldi* over into the area near the targets I believe also on five. With two minutes left on my five, I could tell the *Bismarck* was getting real low and it was going to be extremely close if I was to survive. Luis, in the mean time stayed in the area, but would circle out every so often. It might have been the heat or worry, but I was feeling a lump in my throat as I watched the *Bismarck* get lower, and lower, and lower. At about thirty seconds left, the *Bismarck* took on a slight port list and had only about 1/2" of freeboard showing above the water. In the meantime, Luis was circling around, if I remember correctly, he was out of control. Luis' wake then rocked the *Bismarck* ever so slightly, but it was JUST enough to finish off the sink. She rolled to port and sank by the bow about a foot from shore.

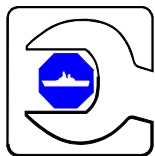
Post sink inspection revealed a burnt-out Stinger motor as the culprit for the problem. Since this pump was my original spare installed due to an impeller coming apart on Sunday, I didn't have a quick exchange installation to replace the motor. However, with some help from Charley Stephens, the *Bismarck* was ready for campaign that afternoon. She wouldn't hit the water however due to another problem I'll save for another day...



Casting for Idiots

or the confessions of an
amateur turret maker

by Ted Brogden



I don't know about you, but I've always admired those lifeboats and turrets that some of our

captains make on their own. Since Steve and Charley don't make turrets for my QE and Rucker had one that would work for my ship, I figured it might be a good time to see if I could learn how to cast my own. So, how to proceed? Knowing nothing about resin casting, I talked with Bryan Finster since I know he makes some of his own turrets. Bryan assured me that it was easy and even Fluegel made his own lifeboats. Courage fortified with that knowledge, I trekked out to the local hobby store and purchased an Alumilite starter's kit (\$30 – keep an eye on this), which I was assured had everything I needed to cast some turrets.

Back at the ranch, I carefully follow the instructions. I build the containment boxes for the turret and the lifeboat. I mix the mold stuff together and note that it sure doesn't look like much. I pour the mold material into the turret box – and it doesn't even cover up the turret! AARGGH! Back to the hobby store, but no, they don't stock just the mold material. They can order it. Guess I'll sulk for a while and wait for it to come, Friday at the latest. Meanwhile it dawns on me that I don't have enough resin for 4 turrets, so I find and order it online along with some mold release powder (\$30 + \$40). 3 weeks later, I give up on the store and order the mold material online as well. I order

2lbs just to ensure I have enough (\$30 + \$40 + \$60 – isn't this getting expensive for some turrets and a couple of lifeboats?).

Okay! 4 days later and I've got everything. I finish the first half of both molds, make new containment boxes, and flip the molds over so I can make the second half of the molds. The instructions say to coat the first half of the mold with mold release powder and blow off the excess. So a cloud of dust later and I pour in the mold material (just went thru the first pound and into the second pound of the mold stuff. Sure glad I purchased extra).

4 hours later, its time to cast turrets! I break down the containment boxes and pry the mold apart. Well, pry isn't a good description, tear is more like it as the mold material has eaten the powder and stuck together. After cutting the second half of the mold into two pieces, I am able to separate the mold halves and the original. Okay, it looks bleak (and I do throw away the lifeboat mold as unusable), but I decide to try and cast a turret. The pieces of the mold are superglued

together and to a piece of plastic. The resin gets mixed up, poured, and it works! I have cast a turret! Well, it does have a few flaws, so maybe I can remake the second half of the mold and fix the problems. And I'll make another attempt at the lifeboat mold. But this time, I powder the dickens out of the first mold half and leave all the excess powder. So once again, containment boxes, mold material is mixed and poured, and AGAIN I run out of mold silicon! The turret is covered but half the lifeboat is sticking out. Okay, I'll live without the lifeboats. And of course the turret mold will come apart this time..... You get the picture. Stuck again as one piece (who writes these instructions, anyway?). I am able to cut the mold apart without completely destroying it, so a short time later I have finally cast 5 pretty good looking turrets.

Bottom line, I guess I've learned a new skill, but I don't know if I can afford it. Now if only I had some more mold silicon for those lifeboats.....



Been wondering whatever happened to Curly? Curly dropped off the door prizes for Nats with me in a big tub, and when I drove to his place after Nats to return it, I took this picture of his house. Hey Curly, better check those decimal points!!

“Taking One for the Team...Wingman!!!”

By Joel Goodman



So there I was...Nats 2003, Perry GA, part of the sight host committee, Allied Captain on B fleet, Attached to a squadron of Sodaks, sun burnt, excited, foolish and a frequent Wal-Mart shopper.

Monday, battle is called, Don Cole in the *USS Alabama*, Kevin Bray in the *USS Massachusetts* and me in the *USS Indiana*, match up and take on a triumvirate of Scharnys. We work well as a team, one blocking while the other two engage. Alas, their speed ends up too much and they evade our pursuit and make it back to their friends with moderate damage. Things pretty much worked that way until Tuesday.

On Tuesday, the *USS Indiana* experienced the same design flaw as the *South Dakota* at the battle of Guadalcanal. The power of her own guns would trip the breakers and shut down the electrical power to the ship...or maybe my soldering stinks. After a bump, the *Indiana* went dead. It was late in the battle, calling five out of control had the effect of dumping buckets of chum in the ocean to attract a great white. Mark Roe picks up the scent. He approaches swiftly, bringing his triple stern guns to bear. The *Scharnhorst* unleashes a salvo, then another, and another, he backs away to reset distance. Things look bleak for the crippled *Indiana*. Out of the distance I hear a bugle; it's the Calvary. Kevin and Don to the rescue. Kevin intercedes and blocks the *Scharnhorst* from inflicting

further damage on the *Indiana*. For his troubles he eats bbs three at a time. Kevin takes one for the team while Don bumps the *Indiana* in an attempt to jar her back to life. Nothing works. Don attacks the Scharny as my five minute timer expires. Survival! I touch the *Indiana* and she comes back to life...hmmm, foreshadowing.

Next battle, second sortie. It's Ty Supancic's turn to take one for the team. After looking for his ship far away from shore, Ty comes out without it so the Sodak group can finish off a ship we had been chasing. He was almost down when 'Man in the Water' was called. The Axis ship sits and pumps, while Ty looks for his ship. The tension mounts. Don and I try to remain close but we drift away from the wounded Axis ship due to our horizontal pump streams. The battle is resumed and we finish her. Don forgot to turn his pump on and

water...how embarrassing. Don starts to push me to the homeport, If I don't come in at a port it's a sink. More chum, more sharks. Josh Bruder lines up the triple stern of his *Roma*, and starts to work. I start to feel like a watermelon at a Gallagher show. Don bangs away at the *Indiana*, trying to bring her back to life, but to no avail. Then the a fluke of fluke happens the *Roma's* stern guns hit the *Indiana* at the exact spot and she fires back to life. No sink here my friends! I had survived despite my building skills. I shot back at the *Roma* a couple of times, called five, and got off as a liability. I didn't quite do the 'happy dance' but I was pleased not to have sunk.

Friday was better, she ran well. But I did call every little weenie ram, dead in the water 3 times will turn you into a Nancy fast. I don't mind sinking, but I prefer it be from damage and set off to do that very thing. But it was Don's turn to take

one for the team. Don was the marked man for the Axis, but he wasn't going down soft. He attacked the *Kirishima*, ate the hay maker, and did his damage. I held off her wingman, the *Nagato*, while Don worked. The old *Kongo* class ship didn't last but she got her licks in. In the second, sortie Don succumbed to the damage.

It turns out that all those holes in you

bow aren't really "speed holes" that reduce wind drag after all. That will teach you to trust Homer from the Simpson's. I took more damage on Friday than at any other time since last years Friday battle. But that's another story wingman.



Joel and Don chase the Fuso

Photo by Chris Pearce

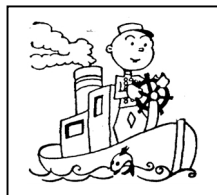
almost followed him. Shortly after, I get bumped and go dead, again. Nonchalantly waiting my five, with Lief he figures out I'm dead in the water and tries to prop wash me, but I only had 8 holes. I wasn't going anywhere. I end my five and come off.

Thursday campaign ... bumped by a convoy ship and dead in the



The President's Column:

by Lars



Well, this issue has taken a great deal of time. I also spent a long time pondering the title for the

Nats article. Nats always leads off the Fall issue, as it should. Nats is the highlight of the whole battling season for many of us, and the questions that came out of Nats seemed to be ones that needed answers. But these questions have always been with us. How do we balance the different types of battlers, the perfectionists types versus the 'good enough' types. The "Fire Hard" types versus the "Fire only as hard as we need to" types. The "Highly detailed super perfect scale" types versus the "That looks like scale from fifty feet" types. The 'Win at all costs' competitive types versus the 'don't score, just fight'

types. This hobby has tried to cater to all these types ever since it started. We can see what happens when the balance is lost, the fun suffers.

I spent a fair deal of time during Nats and immediately afterwards talking with folks on how we slipped up. It is my opinion that nothing that happened at Nats was the result of anyone being outright malicious. It seemed to be mostly egos that prevented folks from thinking as clearly and as thoroughly as they should. For some it was bruised egos, for others the egos may have been a bit high. My own personal worst moment came when I was thinking how a certain strategy looked from my own personal viewpoint, rather than that of the other battlers.

I'm sure there are folks that think the BOD should've done more after Nats, either punishing someone as an example, or setting more stringent policies. The problem is the egos and personality problems will be with us always, and it will always be the responsibility of every

individual to keep their own selves in line. The 'rains of protest' should prevent the brushfires that we saw at this last Nats from happening again soon. If not, then I would expect the BOD to step in and act in the cases where the lessons of this Nats were not learned.

In spite of it all, I still saw many more instances of good sportsmanship and good battling at this Nats than we had problems, and I view that as a very good sign.

Nats Award Winners:

Sportsmanship: John Bruder

Best of Scale:

Ron Horbul, Dana Graham

Best of Scale Convoy: Joel Goodman

Rookie of the Year: Tom Melton

Most Feared Axis: Charley Stephens

Individual Combat: Tim Beckett

LifeLine: Ted Brogden

Founders Trophy: Tim Beckett

Class 6: Chris Pearce

Class 5: Chris and Dave Au

Class 4: Ron Horbul

Class 3: Chris Kessler

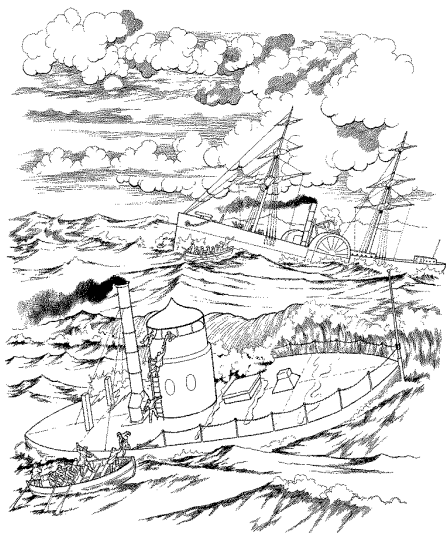
Class 2:

Randy Stiponovich, David Asman

Best Dressed: Rick King

TASK FORCE 144

1486 Oakdale Ave.
West St. Paul, MN 55118



"Every naval expedition we have attempted since I have been at the head of the government has failed, because the admirals see double and have picked up the idea, I don't know where, that you can make war without running risks." - Napoleon

Personal Note: Sorry this issue is so late, guys -- Lars