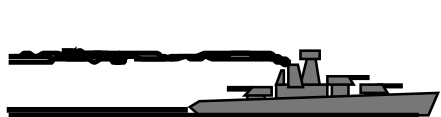


TASK FORCE 144



The Official Newsletter of Model Warship Combat, Inc.

www.mwci.org

Fall – 2007

CALENDAR OF MWC EVENTS

Oct 21, 2007

Fall Showdown

Arthur Lake, Auburn, CA
Contact: Brandon Smith,
(530) 885-1579
seaviper_2001@yahoo.com
Unsanctioned

Nov 10, 2007

South Texas Turkey Shoot

Bomber Field,
Houston, TX
Contact: Doug Hunt,
dhunt81@comcast.net
Unsanctioned \$5.

Nov 16-18, 2007

November Turkey Shoot

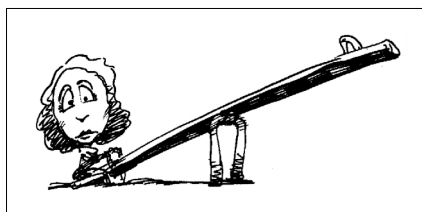
Port of Sanford Marina,
Sanford, FL
Contact: Rick King, (407) 322-7750
rking157@cfl.rr.com
Sanctioned



From the BOD: Battler's Connection has donated a Class 3 or lower hull for the membership early bird drawing. If you pay your 2008 membership from now until 12-10-07, you will be placed in the drawing.

NATS 2007: A WIFE'S PERSPECTIVE

by Dawn Lamb



I can always tell when Nats season is close at hand. The sounds of power tools, usually a sander, are heard coming from the garage, bits and pieces of old hull are strewn about my husbands work area, the smell of dope permeates the house even though the garage doors are closed, and the phone seems to ring constantly. But this year, this year is different, much much different than in years past. This year we are the hosts, and yes I once again use the word "we".

When Brian told me that he volunteered to have Nats here in Houston this year, he told me that I

wouldn't have to do anything, or more like I told him I didn't want to do anything to help organize it since technically I am not a member. I remember hearing wives of past site hosts talking about the responsibilities that they took on because their husbands were at work or working on ships or something and I didn't want that. After all I am a stay at home mom of four daughters, I don't need anything else on my plate. Just to make things even more interesting this year Brian is the club treasurer. Not a big deal really except when he was processing memberships I was the one stuffing the envelopes with the welcome letters and member cards (so if you didn't get one or you got the wrong one or you unfortunately got one that was a little crooked, don't blame him. It was my fault.)

Things were going along really well in the planning. Brian had the site, Reichenbach had the Texas, Pearce had the t-shirts, Steve Reynolds had trophies and Doug had



These guys aren't here for the atmosphere, where's the cake? Photo by M. Melton



MWC OFFICERS and Board of Directors

President—Randy Stiponovich V

1059 S. Johnson Way
Lakewood, CO 80226
303-980-9904
sinkazuki@earthlink.net

V.P.—Andy Bruce Reg II

PO Box 54
Elmira, MI 49730
???-???-????
lakerstatefan@gmail.com

Secretary—Bob Hoernemann I

1480 Lake Susan Hills Drive
Chanhassen, MN 55317
952-448-8808
r_hoernemann@hotmail.com

Treasurer—Brian Lamb IV

1511 Redway
Houston, TX 77062
281-480-2051
iunnrais@gmail.com

Ron Horbul Reg. I

360 Andover Blvd N.E.
Ham Lake, MN 55304
763-786-8371
superiorpattern@hotmail.com

Luis Negron Reg II

215 Spencer
Lansing, MI. 48951
517-886-5179
ostfrieslandn@yahoo.com

Peter Demetri Reg III

17 Lanvale St.
Port Wentworth, GA 30062
912-966-2261
pkdeme@aol.com

Tim Krakowski Reg III

1479 Brookcliff Dr.
Marietta, GA 30062
770-509-1101
tkrakows@gmail.com

Steven Reynolds Reg IV

110 Llama Loop
Kyle, TX 78640
512-779-4909
sreynolds2@austin.rr.com

Ty Supancic Reg V

20760 Vose St.
Winnetka, CA. 91306
818-469-7838
tyger@socal.rr.com

the hotel. All present an accounted for. Oh wait, what's missing from this list? Yes the food, the banquet. So Brian asked me to call a local place that had done some catering for one of my events last year and find out what they would charge us for fajitas for 60. So I called them, got a quote and told them that I would call back around the first of May and then again the first of July. I thought it was all taken care of. The day came when it was time to start finalizing all the details, Texas taken care of... check, site taken care of... check, trophies ordered... check, t-shirts ordered... check, hotel secured... check, banquet taken care of... no check. Brian decided it was going to be too much of a hassle for me to get the food here, put it in my suburban, drive it to the Texas and set it up. Also we would have had to make sure we had plates, cups, forks, drinks, ice and anything else we would need to serve dinner to 66 people. He started searching for something else. After a search of the area around the Texas, Brian came across a place just right down the road from there and he suggested I call them to get a quote. Yes, he suggested "I" call them. So I did. I got the quote and I booked it without talking to him first. I then called him at work, told him how much it was

going to be and what we were getting and told him to call back with the club billing information so that everyone would have something to eat on the night of the banquet.

Then he asked me about desert. Hrm, well that wasn't included in the quote we got and they really didn't have any deserts to begin with. So he came up with the idea for me, yes me, to make cakes for 66 people. He dug around in my recipe box and came up with one of his mom's recipes. So, I told him that I would but my fee would be dinner, on the Texas with everyone else sans kids. He agreed. So on the Thursday and Friday morning of Nats I will be in my kitchen baking five chocolate cakes and making them all gooey and yummy for everyone to enjoy.

For really the first time I feel like part of the club. I don't battle, I don't pay dues, I don't vote, I don't read the emails but I feel like I belong. Who knew that all it took was fajitas and Butterfinger cake for 60?

Would I do it again? Yeah I would. Will I volunteer to do it again? Probably not. But if I am asked, I will because my husband loves this hobby, I love him, and don't tell anyone but I like this hobby too.



The Lamb Clan clusters around Dad's ship and shipmate. Photo by Mike Melton

Super Sunday!

by Steve Reichenbach



NATS has started! Sunday was a SUPER Sunday for a lot of reasons, but I'm getting ahead of myself.

Nats kinda started on Friday night when Fluegel met me, Bryan Finster, Kevin Bray, Bryan Bray and Admiral Jeff Lide for dinner at Raphaels Mexican Cantina in north Dallas. Fluegel orders this flaming dish, which the waitress brought to the table with BIG fire blazing on top of his plate, that was turned into some burrito looking things with tortillas. When Fluegel's dinner came out, I thought they were gonna burn the place down with so much fire! Fluegel got this big grin on his face, and said "I'm not afraid of hell fire, I eat it for dinner!"

The next morning my 16 year old youngest daughter Kate drove me all the way from our neighborhood to Huntsville, Texas just north of Houston where we stopped for a Whataburger and to wave at "Sam". Kate scared me a few times driving through Dallas, but she only got flipped off twice.... once when she changed lanes suddenly to a lane where another car was, and another time when another very young driver in another car felt Kate was in "her" lane. All said, she did really good, so I told her I give her an "A minus" on her driving. Once we got to the hotel I was impressed by the significance that my youngest kid (who used to pick up BBs in my boat with flowers in her hair back when she was shorter than my lakeside table) had just driven me to NATS.

My very best friend in the world, Kevin Bray, drove down with us and used walkie talkies to chat along the way. Kate gives Kevin a C minus on his driving, because he "never uses his turn signals." I shared this with Kevin on the walkie talkie, and he started to emphasize each time he

used his turn signal. "He used it at least 3 times" Kate reports!

Kate met with her Nana at the hotel, and they were so happy to see each other, and were off to have a lot of fun during the week. In the meanwhile, a large group formed in the lobby of folks trying to get rooms, with the fortunate folks getting ground floor rooms.

I spent the first 3 hours of our stay just trying to get into a room (as the first room they gave me was occupied by another guest, the second room smelled like something had died, ending with a third room that smelled like fresh paint.)

That night I started sheeting my Portland cruiser in the hotel room, so it would end up smelling like dope, glue, spray paint and latex paint. Yumm!

Being an experienced traveler, I brought my fan from home to help me relax, and it broke. Bummer. It was also raining like cats and dogs outside, so NATS was shaping up to be very wet wet wet!

One of the greatest things about our hobby is being reunited with friends from across the country... good people who we only see once a year. For me this year I took one look at John Bruder and started to smile. John's this big tall guy, and for years has had a very military look about him... and this year he shows up with his usual mile-wide grin on his face, but the smile is slightly

covered by a mile of whiskers. Guess he's enjoying some new liberties now that he's no longer in full time military mode! Josh Bruder his son was Allied admiral, and arrived on Sunday morning fresh from serving with the Air Force. He's been flying in KC-135s while in

the Air Force Academy. His dad (and the rest of us) is very proud of the work Josh has been doing, and he turned out to be a very good admiral.

Saturday night I went to dinner with all my buddies like Lief and Fluegel and Lars and Bryan Finster and Brian Lamb. Many of us went to "China Bear", a HUGE Chinese place that had the biggest buffet I ever saw, and even had their own gift shop where you could buy bonsai trees, bamboo, kimonos and the like. For dinner I wasn't feeling 100%, so I had my new favorite beverage... Water with extra lemons with sugar. Yep, very weak lemonade. It was free, and although I didn't participate in the biggest chinese buffet I ever saw, it was a fun time. This place was the UBER buffet.

Chris Kessler is another one of the many special people in our hobby. The first time I saw Chris he was a Missouri college kid, and because he was interested in the hobby, some of us drove up to his dorm room to visit. He had this huge brick wall where they played video games on a projector one of the guys had picked up when a local pizza dive went out of business.

Chris graduated and now builds "smart" artillery shells for the US Army in New Jersey. He's been working with the Army for over a



Too fast in reverse... the Gneisenau on Sunday

year, and visited with me for some time because my oldest daughter is now in a US Army boot camp. Chris tells me she has joined the greatest army the world has ever known. That really brightened my day, as I've been thinking about our new soldier a lot.

Kevin Bray and I made plans to attend an early Sunday church service so we could be at the pond on time. Lief and Fluegel went to church with my good friend Doug Hunt who lives in Houston. At the lake, one at a time each of these good friends found me and told me the same story about looking for my room that morning, to invite me to come to church, and not being able to find me. I felt like I really missed out on some good fellowship, but it was nice that we all did get to church that morning. "Worship before you warship" Fluegel likes to say!

At the H&H ranch, we were able to unload our boat stuff on the nicest day we would have all week. Warm sunshine, no ants, cool breezes and high spirits were the rule on this Super Sunday! We had plenty of tables with electricity, concrete floors, shade, and a really cool set of ponds with a bridge very close by. H&H is probably everyone's favorite site... if only an identical site could be located in every state.

With ship testing well underway, I helped my good friend Brian Lamb get ready for the captains meeting. The meeting started with a warm greeting from Randy, our "Smurfident", followed by a few words from our CD and our site hosting group. My wife's new hobby blended with mine this year, and we gave embroidered shirts to Brian Lamb, Kevin Hovis, Steve Reynolds, Doug Hunt and Chris Pearce who all helped make NATS happen. Traci and I also thought it would be cool to give a matching shirt to each junior captain, so Nataniel Goodson, Bryan Bray and Maggie Groissaint each received a shirt during the captains meeting. I helped Brian Lamb hand out tee-shirts once the meeting was over.

So why call it "Super Sunday"? This is the first NATS I've ever been to where nobody sank during ship testing. It's also the first NATS I can remember where I didn't ram anyone. Well, almost.

The big controversy for me this year was the speed of my ship in reverse. Having a ship that goes in reverse a full 12 seconds after throwing the stick was a sore spot with me, so this year I put motors on the outer shafts with the idea that I would "keep up with the Joneses" and be a little faster in reverse. When Kevin Hovis set up his speed trap, I thought it might be a good idea to time my ship speed... in reverse. Running a course in reverse is hard, but running through a 5 foot long speed trap looked easy.

Famous last words...

My first pass through the speed trap in reverse, Kevin shot me this look. It was one of those "holy smokes" looks. I ask him what my speed was and he says "16 seconds".

I didn't believe that for a minute, so I decided to run through again. Well, the second time through my boat props run into the metal straps which are submerged on the corners of the speed trap, and the speed trap and my boat become inter-twined and really bad sounds come from my boat. A few minutes later, I'm wet, Kevin is wet, and my boat is back on the table with a bent up rudder.


I spent the rest of the day speed testing my boat, every time coming up with a really fast speed in reverse. I talked with several other captains, including the Allied admiral about my ship, and everyone is very kind and tells me I can still play, but I felt just awful. Later that night it finally hit me that by removing one of the gears from one reverse motor, I could (and did) slow my boat to legal speed in reverse.

That night after ship testing was more fun. A large group went to Moe's Barbeque where I finally

was hungry enough to eat a big meal. I was to regret the meal the following Monday morning, when I deposited most of it on the lawn after the first sortie. You can plan a vacation, but you can't plan when you will become ill, and I became "sick as a dog" and ended up returning home Monday night, and missing much of NATS. It was a drag to miss out on so much fun and friendship, but happily I was able to return on Thursday afternoon. We were all able to enjoy a great time on the USS Texas on Friday for dinner.

If you have never hosted NATS, it's a real thrill to plan an event, and then have 50 friends show up and enjoy themselves at an event that you helped make happen. Barry Ward and the whole staff of the USS Texas were so nice, and we really enjoyed the battleship... but I'll let someone else write that story.

The Axis captains had a fun meeting on Sunday night, Jeff Lide was in rare form. He and Bryan Finster had planned a smoking dragon, mood music, banners, flags, and even a marshmallow man stuffed with fireworks so we could "blow up the Allied admiral". It was hilarious to see how carefully Jeff lit up that marshmallow!

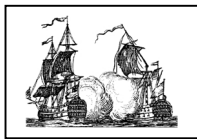
Like the marshmallow man, Sunday at NATS was a great way to light up the week. Strategies were made, ships were readied, and we all had a super Sunday! 



Steve's ram victim, Kevin's speed trap. Photo by Steve R

MONDAY BATTLE REPORT THE BATTLE OF THE BRIDGE.

A personal account by
D.W.Fluegel



Haunting
truth, spoken by a
wise man decades

ago, “He who wins Monday wins
Nats” The pressure to win today is
big..... It’s raining.

Sleep

Earlier this year, Axis Admiral
Jeff Lide lead the Axis in a
recommitment to campaign, and lots
of fun crazy Axis meetings. Now the
anticipation of all the events clearly
distracting his attempts at sleep; Jeff
said he usually forced himself to stay
up and work on the ships, now he
forced himself to go to sleep, in order
to be fully rested for battle. It was a
good idea, but he tossed and turned
the whole night long. But it wasn’t
just Jeff, Kevin Bray woke up at 2 or
3AM, got dressed, and went to the
Rosewood conference room just to
tweak his guns. I woke up at 3:15
AM, deciding my pump motor was
bad, stood up, put on my glasses in
order to change the motor, realized I
had some mental disorder (PNS, pre
Nats syndrome) and went back to a
restless sleep.

The Axis strategy, in a nut shell three fleets in one.

#1 Fast ships (stood to the right
of the bridge)- Rule the big lake,
protect the bows of the “mixed
fleet”, squeeze the Allies into the
guns of the “Mixed fleet” at the
bridge.

#2 Mixed fleet- 24, 26, & 28
second ships ((located kind of under
the bridge, between the other two
fleets)(Jeff, Lief, Finster, Beckett,
and Fluegel))- dominate the bridge
area. Provide a safe area for Axis,
and charge a toll for Allies to pay
crossing under the bridge.

#3 Bridge people (they actually
stood on the bridge)- dominate
channel, protect bows of Mixed fleet,

reinforcements for other two groups,
squeeze the Allies into the guns of
the “Mixed fleet “ at the bridge and
assure that the Axis dominated with
loaded guns in the ending five
minutes of the sortie.

Again, all three sub-fleets were
to act as one, squeezing the Allies.
Also the two groups at the bridge
gained total vision in this critical area
under the bridge, by viewing the
water both from above, and below
the bridge.

I felt uncomfortable going into
the conference room and seeing our
strategy proudly drawn on the
marker board by Allied captain Bray.
Though not perfect, it was spookily
close; some details with specific
captains were even nailed.
Congratulations Kevin, the CIA
could use you.

Predictions

Axis believed the Allies would
win, I asked about ten. Tim Beckett
was the exception. “If we had Chris
here with the Bismarck all week, I
would guarantee a win”. Tim failed
his urine test.

Allies; I did not ask because they
would lie. For example; Allied
captain Dana predicted that Finster’s
boat would go farther vertically than
it did horizontally. You see why I
didn’t ask?

Bad omens

OK, a thousand dollars spent,
countless precious “free hours”,
vacation time, and weary hours of
driving have all come to a single
point in time, “its battle!”, but first,
my radio decides to go out! Two
minutes before battle, with no
warning my Futaba shut down. I just
stood there, unable to breathe;
suddenly the universe started rotating
about my ship, all kinds of visual
twirlings, I suppose like drugs, dude.
In a voice only I could hear Satan
said “you will not get over this.” At
about the same time the Yamato also
lost control. Bad omens.

Lets Battle!

In fact, the opening sortie of the
battle is anticlimatic. WWII started

with what historians called “the
phony war”. In a tribute to historic
scale, Nats also starts slowly,
carefully, but mostly slowly.
Captains playfully insulted their
opponents, kind of a witty insult
contest, but without much wit.
Finally (9:35 AM), the Allies made
the first move and attacked us from
across the big lake and then at the
bridge. They attacked us on our own
turf, peace loving Axis were forced
to pull out our WMD’s. The fight
was on, and heavy. The bridge was
the sight of close ships, pumping,
bumping, bee bee’s barking out
powerfully and pump streams
blasting upwards, hard and loud,
hosing down every thing and every
body. It was intense. Beckett’s
powerful Bismarck was pumping non
stop under the bridge, creating a very
localized “rainforest of hell”. He
whispered to me that he was going to
sink second sortie, not due to
additional battle damage, but his
batteries were going to die. Chris
Grossaint ram sank Rick’s
Scharnhorst. You may guess some
yelling accompanied the ram, but it
was not done by Rick. Jeff whispers
to me that perhaps we should
abandon this side of the bridge?
Shortly we were relieved to hear the
Allies announce “back up, we don’t
need to fight their game, we don’t
need the bridge”. The Axis took
quite a bit of comfort in their
apparent retreat. Jeff said “they
blinked first”. We had won a
heartfelt symbolic victory.

Beckett’s Bismarck took all it
could, something had to change.
Like the real Bismarck’s harassment
of the British in WWII, he to would
take his powerful wing man, Lamb,
and attack the Allies in “the big
lake”. The cry went out “man in the
water”, who sank first? Yea,
Melton’s North Carolina sank,
another less symbolic Axis victory.
Melton later said “I think it was
mostly Lide, but Lamb finished me
off”. The allies threw everything
they could at the Bismarck. Six ships

attacked the Bismarck, even young Maggy (one of my favorite new battlers, the only captain to do cartwheels at Nats, just because). Finally his five minutes were over. His ship pumped heavily at lakes side, like a sick bloated cow in the ditch, waiting to die. Don Cole said “We will get him next sortie”. Five Allies swiftly, yet loudly rumbled over to reinforce the battle at the bridge. Our “bridge fleet” left the channel reinforcing all Axis and as battle wound down, it seemed that the Axis ruled the lakes. Brandon shared his prediction, “we will hold the bridge all week”.

Allied Admiral Josh Bruder proudly announced “with no ammo, three ships held the entire Axis fleet for five minutes”. Comically, many of the ships they “held” were holding them with no amo as well. At 10:43 AM, the opening sortie ended. Wow.

I asked some guys to take notes for my article, I had to take the Baden back to the motel to try and fix the radio problems. Turned out it needed a new receiver, that’s odd, in numerous shake down cruises this fatal flaw shamefully hid, just waiting for the worst moment to give birth to a demonic possession aboard the Baden. Driving away from the battle seemed wrong, unnatural. The notes for this article were pretty sparse for the second sortie.

Battle one, Sortie two, Monday AM

I am not a witness of this battle.

Looking at the battle damage eight captains amassed 2000+ points of damage! It would have been interesting to interview each of them. They are:

Axis	Tim Beckett	4665	sank
Axis	Gerald Roberts	3655	sank
Axis	Todd Olson	2485	sank
Axis	Peter Ellison	2220	
Axis	David Ranier	2215	
Allied	Chris Au	2180	
Axis	Lief Goodson	2110	
Axis	Adm. Jeff Lide	2095	sank
Score: Allies		23,290	
Axis		15,565	



The Axis and Allied Bridge lines

Photo by Mike Melton

The rains came hard, and lunch is served. This rain delay allowed me the time to make it back with the Baden, ever so ready to join the fight!

Battle two of Monday Nats.

The Axis’ sacred gong rang out, announcing that it was time for an Axis meeting. Admiral Jeff announced that the strategy seemed to be working, but that our boat problems had not yet given the plan a fair test. Pete Demitri said of the Allied meeting “we were told we should follow our orders, and our admiral has us a pretty good plan set up”. As far as I could tell, the Allies increasingly attacked the bridge from the channel side and even split their fleets and launched them from different sides of the bridge. In planning session #454, I think in November at the Salt Grass, it had been decided that should the Allies ever put a smaller fleet in the channel that we would reinforce the “bridge group” and attack and consume their small channel squad. Instead, in the noise of battle, we defended the bridge, our default strategy. It was like we were astronauts making a difficult landing on a new planet and our plans were irrelevant, made up in

Houston years ago by egg head engineers.

The battling was more of the same; stern to stern grind it out trench warfare around the bridge, with additional action taking place in the big lake and the channel. As I had missed the first battle it felt so good to be battling, and helping the team. I remember thinking; this is so fun, that it’s worth all the misery. An impressive sting of my ear lobe followed by the realization that the guns are fully developed and I should consider shielding my oddly precious face with my transmitter. We were battling in a crouched position under the bridge, face level with the most possible number of bee bees. Kind of a stupid position if you don’t understand the rush of combat. Maybe stupid anyway? Hard fought battles continued on at all three fronts. One of our Scharnhorsts went down, and then word came down, captain to captain along the shore, much like a bucket brigade, that Allied Admiral Bruder ram sank Paul Block’s ship! That will cost them, and cushion the impressive lead the Allies were amassing.

Personally, I felt that I had let the team down. Rudder problems shook

my confidence in my boat's motel refit, and I called five-minutes early in the second sortie. Oddly, under the bridge, it was safe to sit out your Axis five minute waiting period. Kind of like the calm in the eye of a hurricane. It's embarrassing, rudders and watertight boxes are simple systems that sometimes haunt many of us.

Battle ended for the day with little talk and less eye contact. Instead, lots of packing to return to the motel, pretty business like. The Allies are pretty noble winners. Had I done well and the Axis were winning, I fear I would have been crowing, and my walk would have included a bit of dance. At 4:57 PM I was on the road, feeling a little whipped. Not so much by the Allies as by the lack of ship reliability, and bad luck.

Looking at the scores, eight captain's ships received 2000+ points of damage, and four of the captains were the same as in the first battle. Are they war criminals, war heroes, or misguided martyrs? I'm a little relieved that my name was not listed.

Axis Gerald Roberts 5,895 sank last sortie. Sink quicker Gerald!

Repeat

Allied Brian Koehler 5,165 ank last sortie.

Axis Peter Ellison 3,670 sank both sorties...is that possible?

Repeat

Allied Lars Dahl 3,205

Allied Tom Melton 2,799 sank last sortie

Axis Steve Rechenback 2,660 sick and went home to Dallas with the flu.

Axis Lief Goodson 2,465 sank last sortie Repeat

Axis David Ranier 2,215

Repeat

Score: Allies 28,520

Axis 23,215

That made about a 13,000 pt lead for the noble Allies, after one day.

MONDAY NIGHT.

Monday night I did a complete overhaul of my Palmer regulator that Nathan Goodson was borrowing for the week. Actually, he was borrowing my light cruiser that the regulator was in. At Nats you do technical work that you don't feel qualified to do, but you discover abilities you were not confident you had. Because it's war and what you did prayerfully, carefully, patiently at home you do in one fifth the time, still prayerfully and still successfully in the Nats motel room. I kind of consider the Nats motel room sacred, kind of a hospital emergency room. I religiously prepare the altar, I mean work table.

The Axis meeting was at the pool. Only half the captains showed up (something about a meal taking too long at a restaurant). The sacred oriental gong proudly rang out, and the incense burner smoked. I imagined normal pool-side vacationers grabbing their children and fleeing to their locked rooms. The nightly drawing for the "Axie's grab-bag" is conducted. Captain Finster wins! Bryan pulls the treasures from the bag, holding them

above his head, like a man holds up a string of fish he just caught. He announces each item; we the crowd go oooh and awwwwh. A brand new kip solenoid, perfect for our hobby is the most prized bootie. They're so smooth and shiny when they're new. We all hope to win the grab bag some lucky nats night.

Fortunately pretty much everybody that brought convoy ships was at the meeting. A seven ship convoy would be heavily escorted, all must be made right. The strategy was called a "Connmi", kind of like a tsunami, the killer waves. Tsunami have multiple

killer waves, our first killer wave was the seven successful round trip convoys, the second wave was the seven fresh warships that the convoy captains launched after their convoy captaining was over. The Axis have traditionally done well at campaign so last years spanking had not set well over the long winter. Convoy ship construction and strategies were thoughtfully conducted, and confidence was back. If we could win this big, like the Allies did last year, 10,000 points, we would be back into the chase for victory. If...

That night at supper, we did not talk of scores, kind of an unspoken understanding that the Allies had won Monday, and all that implied. Still, Admiral Lide's spirits remained high, due in part to his magnificent showing with his new ship the Fuso. Talk had been that he had peeked; "nobody does well with the Fuso". Jeff was almost dancing with the knowledge that he was still "king of the watery hill".

Monday night we slept well. I don't know why, but it was very good.



Todd Olson's Scharnhorst

Photo by M. Melton

Nats: Tuesday and Wednesday



by Lars

Tuesday found the Allied fleet in a good mood. The Axis weren't as boisterous as they had been Monday morning, but there was still plenty of spirit in the ranks. I was rooming with two Axis rookies, Peter Ellison and Ryan Butler, and they'd given the Allied members of Port Polar Bear a report on the Axis Strategy meeting of the night before. According to them, the meeting was forty minutes of "Blah, Blah, Blah, BONZAI! Blah, Blah, Blah, BONZAI!"

Every morning the van from PPB would manage some sort of minor adventure in the drive-thru at McDonald's, where Peter, Ryan and myself would order breakfast, while Bob Hoernemann would moan about how late this was making us for the lake. They were able to take our order this morning, but things looked bad when the car in front of us stalled, blocking us in. The young black woman driver popped out and asked us for assistance. Bob and Peter jumped out of the van and gave her car a push, which then started when the driver popped the clutch.

At the ranch, the game continued. Jeff Lide rounded the Axis up for a meeting, complete with banging on a large gong, and several Bonzai cheers. The Allies clustered around their Admiral, who usually started each day with a report from the 'Surrender Monkey'. Randy Stiponovich reported on secret negotiations with the Axis on possible Allied surrender terms. This usually involved some combination of women, children, equipment, and ammo, but each day had some new surprise.

Fleet battle 3 started with the Axis sticking to their strategy of the day before. The Allies decided to go with a split fleet strategy once again. The Allies hit the water with 24 ships



Don Cole loves to thump freshly skinned North Carolinas.

Photo by the Meltons.

mounting 114.5 units. The Axis had 18 ships with 95.5 units.

The Allies attacked the stubborn Axis from both sides of the bridge. 2/3 of the Allies launched in the small pond, and tried to hold the more experienced Axis in a protective line. Meanwhile the Allied cruisers and other selected battleships tried to raise havoc on the other side, reasoning that they would be able to play with the smaller and less experienced Axis units.

I spent my time with the new Tiger in the Allied holding line, jockeying with the other Allied units. Fighting under the bridge presented many challenges, as vision was often blocked by something, whether one was on the bridge, on the bridge banks to one side or the other, or off on the far shore looking under the bridge. Fluegel, Jeff Lide, Lief, Finster, and other Axis jockeyed for position, trying to entice Allied units to stray too far forward, then pouncing on them for several sidemount shots. The Allies in return used their stern guns when the Axis strayed too far. The game seemed about even for twenty minutes. As ships started to run out

of ammo, they maneuvered to bring other guns to bear, or left the line altogether. Finally the line at the bridge broke down and general havoc ensued.

By this time the Tiger was moving slowly. The new ship, a gift to me from my fellow battlers, was working well except for the one thing I'd changed on her. I'd re-done the motor mounts and prop shafts, and I was having problems keeping props intact, and prop shafts spinning. As the sortie neared the end, David Ranier's VV came into the small pond and I tried to chase her with the Tiger running on one prop. The VV easily kept her distance and survived the sortie. There were no sinks in the first sortie.

Reports from the Allies in the big pond were positive after the first sortie, as the ships there felt that they'd done well.

For the second sortie, my notes and my memory is vague, but apparently the Allied strategy changed again as this time my battle group started in the big pond. The team of Tim Beckett and Brian Lamb were seeking out Allied victims. My Tiger caught their attention a handful

of times, and but this time the motor gears held and the prop blades decided to stay attached, so the Tiger was able to shake them off by leading them into some other big guns. That's about all I remember about the general mayhem.

Whereas the Axis had had plenty of problems on Monday, the Allies now had two ships sinking with little or no damage. Brian Bray's Yavuz and Rick Whitsell, driving 'the Bike', sank with 7 aboves between them. Doug Hunt (2850) and Kevin Bray (2640) also sank, but with much more damage. Other heavily damaged Allied units were Bob H's Warspite (2160), Randy S's Tiger (2310), Kevin H's Missouri (2235), Chris Au's Strasbourg (2210), and Steve Reynold's I-boat (2090). Ron Horbul's cruiser (1030) took heavy damage (for a cruiser) with eleven belows.

For the Axis, they lost several ships too. David Ranier's Littorio (3645) and Marc Morin's Yamato (3130), both rookies, both sank in the second sortie. The two rookie Scharnhorsts, Todd Olson (2260) and Peter Ellison (1035), had a tough week but fought all week long. Todd sank in this battle, but Peter survived! Nathan Goodson's Karlsruhe (665) sank as well. Heavily damaged units included Fluegel (1620), Bryan Finster's Nagato (1460), Ryan Butler's Moo-cow (VDT - 995), Jeff Lide's Fuso (1450), Dirty Dave's Mutsu (1335), Lief (1475), Beckett (1100) and Lamb (1030).

It was somewhat of a surprise to all, but the Axis pulled out the win, scoring **26,420** points to the Allied **22,950**.

Tuesday Campaign: The Allied Campaign master, Bob Hoernemann, was magnificent as his well-laid plans crumbled incrementally to meet reality. There were plenty of convoy ships, but it was discovered, one by one, that some shared radios with warships,

and this had Bob scrambling to match convoy runs to available captains, while still getting most of his warships scheduled to hit the water as well.

When the battle started, the initial Allied convoy ships set out. The Axis, who had a healthy fleet of convoy ships, launched all six convoy ships they had, and so the Allied warships on the water scrambled to meet the Blitzkrieg.

The queen of the Axis convoy ships was Wade Koehn's Bremen, but the queen did not complete the forward run. Peter Ellison's red-coated Mitchel and the Atlantis, captained by Lief Goodson, also were sunk on the forward run. The three survivors turned and sailed again for home. The Mizuho (Brandon Smith) did not survive, leaving only the Irako (Dirty Dave) and Kormeron (Fluegel) to return to the home port.

The Allied campaign ships were a mix of LSTs and CVLs. The Axis ignored the convoy ships, even the CVL's, which sailed around the lake the long way. The only Allied convoy ship that was sunk was an LST that lost control and sailed in circles until Bryan Finster's Nagato tired of it. Initially the Axis tried to tugboat it to shore, with the understanding it would be declared a

combat sink, but the LST wouldn't cooperate and so the Axis sank it.

The other incident of note was that Ty Supancic's 1/144th scale styrene plastic model submarine, altered for our rules, took damage from her escort, Ron Horbul's St. Louis. With a portion of a damaged conning tower dangling in the water, the sub completed a forward run.

As for Allied warships, Dana Graham's Prince of Wales and Bart Purvis' Atlanta were sunk.

For the Axis warships Peter Ellison's Scharnhorst was cornered as the daily typhoon struck. There was some minor discussions, I don't think that the word 'controversy' ever entered into the discussion, but it was ruled a combat sink.

With the strong winds and flashes of lightning, the CD, Kevin Hovis, called a temporary halt to the battle. After about twenty minutes with the rains still looking strong, Kevin declared that the campaign battle was over. Bob Hoernemann was heart broken. "We were just starting to pile on the points, where the Axis were pretty much done."

That evening back at the hotel, references to "Kamikaze, the Divine Wind." started popping up. Even so, the battle was an Allied victory at **10,100** to **6,850**, just not the overwhelming victory they wanted.



The I-boat and the I-sore. There's a sub there too.

Photo by the Meltons

Wednesday, Night Battle: The Wednesday afternoon cruiser battle is increasing in size and stature, but the highlight of Wednesday is still the annual Night Battle.

My new Tiger was not equipped with a set of lights, but I decided late in the afternoon to try to rig something up in order to participate. I pulled out a single searchlight from my kit, and rigged it with alligator clips attached to the contacts on the pump motor, so the lights were on when the pump is on. Normally I like the light on when the pump is off, but this was the best I could do.

Of course, when I launched for the battle, the light refused to work. At this point I didn't want to pull out, so I decided to try to get in some quick shots, and then withdraw early. Unfortunately, I launched in the small pond on the wrong side of the Axis, and had to sail through their fleet to join my Allied brethren. I really doubted my decision at that point, as I nearly lost it under the bridge, and then again as I passed

behind the captains on shore.

The battle started with the Axis once again guarding the bridge approach from the big pond. They tried to entice the Allies over with calls of "There's a ship in trouble here!"

Finally the fleets converged, and shots were exchanged. The Allied big ships emptied their stern guns as targets presented themselves. Wade Koehn's Bismarck (2215 pts) was sunk. The Axis were looking for sidemount victims. When the Allied big ships started disappearing as their sterns guns emptied, the Axis broke out looking for stragglers.

With my lack of lights, I didn't want to get into a running battle at night, so I called five. As the Axis were flooding into Allied seas, I headed the Tiger in the opposite direction. I didn't dare send it under the bridge so I sent her up the shore of the big pond on the far side of the bridge. Then I ran like heck to get over the bridge and back to the shoreline, hoping all the time that the

ship wouldn't sail off in some unknown direction. There I found Bob Hoernemann and his Warspite, also waiting off his five. Bob pointed out the Tiger to me, I could barely see her drifting out towards the middle of the lake.

As I waited out my five, undisturbed by Axis, I started emptying the guns. With each shot I started noticing a brief flicker of light from the Tiger's searchlight. It got stronger and stronger with each shot, until it was finally running at full strength just as my guns emptied. Go figure, eh?

In the meantime, there was commotion out in the middle of the pond as Tom Palmer's cruiser sank. Tom blamed the sink on himself, getting overconfident and also not turning on his pump.

The Axis ended by pleading for any Allied captain remaining on the water to announce themselves, but there was none to be found. The Axis won the battle **5,105 to 3,980**.



Man I hate it when captains paint their ships with the same scheme so you can't tell them apart.

Photo by the Meltons

Thursday NATS 2007

by Bob Hoernemann



The first three fleet battles of NATS had focused on a battle by the bridge. The

Allies came up with a plan to try and break up the Axis Bridge Troll Fleet on Thursday morning. Most of the slow ships and a few fast ships would go into the small pond and the rest of the fast ships, Bob's Warspite, Kevin's Mass, Steve's I-Boat & John's Barham would go in the big pond. The slow ships would line up on the bows of the Axis Trolls and break up their fleet. The Allies also went into the sortie with a seven ship (23-16) and 27.5 unit (109-81.5) advantage on the Axis Fleet.

Things started out well in the first sortie for the Allies. They had the Axis fleet in a sandwich. Splitting the fleet up seems to have surprised the Axis. Tim brought his Bismarck into the battle to try and break things up and took a load of sidemounts from the Warspite. The Scharnhorsts of Peter and Todd were trapped by the Allies and quickly sunk. Brandon also lost his Fuso early in the first sortie. Jeff's Fuso was pretty shot up under the bridge. Dirty's Mutsu was also chased down and sunk as the sortie wore on.

Back in the pits the Allies were sure they had locked up NATS with an overwhelming victory. Plans were being made as to what Axis ship they would sink in the second sortie.

Meanwhile the Axis started working on the hit list. First on the list would be Bob and the Warspite. The Axis had lost four ships, a quarter of their fleet, in the first sortie. The Allies had lost none. The Axis would now be down 12-23 ships and 60-109 units. There were also no heavily damaged Allied ships while the Axis had two of their best battlers (Tim & Jeff) nursing ships that had taken a lot of damage. On paper this could be nothing but an



The North Carolinas survive the Axis Rain of Terror.

Photo by the Meltons

Allied blow out. BUT, as they say that's why we play the game.

Even before battle started the Axis ships were chasing the Warspite. Fluegel's Baden was trying to line up shots as the CD counted down time to battle. As battle was called the entire fleet surrounded the Warspite. Her fleet mates found other places to be. It was not a long fight. Only a ram by Brian's Nagato slowed the feeding frenzy. There was no damage from the ram and Bob brought the Warspite out to finish the fight. At times firing every gun on the ship at the same time. The Warspite slipped beneath the waves, giving a parting shot to the Baden with the haymaker as Fluegel drove by. As Bob went into the water to retrieve his ship Fluegel commented. "Wow, that was fast, I didn't think we'd sink you that soon." I think it was a complement.

Kevin found himself the next ship in line and sunk near the Warspite. Doug's West Virginia also was lost. Now the Axis split and the fast ships started after the Melton brothers' NCs. Mike was sunk and Tom was heavily damaged. The slow ships formed up with Jeff as he limped down the shoreline near the far pavilion. Jeff was trying to make it off of his five and was being prop washed by several Allied ships. It looked like Jeff was going to sink

when he was rammed and pushed under.

The Allies were not the only ships sinking. The Axis lost Ryan's VDT, Gerald's Haruna and Wade's Bismarck. The Allies were not done either. Chris' Washington lost battery power and sank. Pete's KGV had a pump hose come loose and sank. It was a miraculous come back by the Axis. They started the second sortie down almost two ships to one. They showed excellent team work that brought them from a blow out to an Allied 3,425 point victory.

Thursday Campaign: With the Axis come back in the morning battle the point gap was about 8,000 points. This campaign battle became the battle the Allies hoped would put them over the top. The Axis had more operational convoy ships then the Allies but the Allies had more cruisers to kill those convoys.

As campaign was called the Allies launched two CVLs and three LSTs. The Axis held off launching any convoys until a few minutes had passed in campaign. The Allies had Kevin's Des Moines and Bob's Minneapolis (The Bike) attacking the targets. The VDTs and Rheinland guarding the targets left a big gap and The Bike was able to get in a pass and knock down all but one target on the right side. The Des Moines also found an opening and hit some of the left side targets.

The CVLs and LSTs were completing their forward run when the Axis launched a convoy ship. They took the ship along the far shore towards the paddle boats and around the entire far side of the pond. This was the same route almost all their convoys took. The Bike and the Chris G's Frog both attacked this convoy. Tim B. was doing a very good job escorting the ship by keeping his Bismarck on one side and the shore on the other side. Any attacker either took Tim's sidemounts or had to risk a push call trying to sneak in on the shore side. A few holes were scored but not enough to sink this convoy as it made a forward run. Steve R's Freighter was not looking good as it came under the bridge. The Bike put a few more holes in it and watched it sink near the shore in the small pond.

The CVLs and two LST made a return run and the Axis had another convoy ship taking the shoreline trip. The LST Lars was running was having control problems and had to stay at the forward base. Todd Olsen had lost control of his Scharny and was stuck up against the shore near the far pavilion. The Bike and Bray's Des Moines put a few holes in the Scharny and a convoy ship that was making a run towards the bridge. Again the escort was keeping the convoy near the shore and his ship pond side. This worked well until they came near the bridge. They did not know Mike Melton's NC was laying under the bridge waiting for them. The cruisers kept the escort busy on the pond side and the NC soon was ripping holes in the side on the convoy ship.

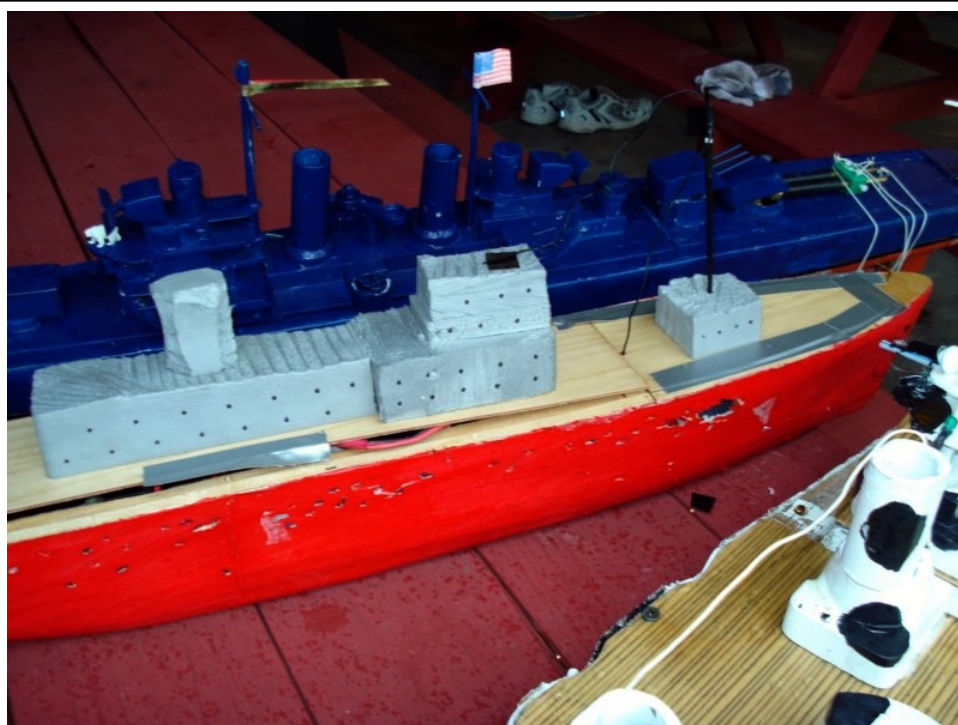
The Allied CVLs had completed their return run, patched holes and put out for a second forward run. Maggie and Rick Whitsell also took their LSTs out for

another run. Campaign was half over, Bob and Chris G both brought their cruisers in for a reload and were surprised to see all of the Allied targets still standing. Bob had to ask Chris if these were really the Axis targets and he had been shooting the wrong targets at the beginning of the battle. Chris had asked the CD the same thing seconds before Bob came in.

Both cruisers took off for another convoy hunting sortie. They soon found another Axis convoy making the run towards the bridge. By working as a team they were able to make the escort ship move letting one ship get shots in. Kevin Bray had brought the Des Moines in and was getting the Massachusetts ready for a sortie. Steve Reynolds had completed another return trip with his CVL and got the I-boat ready to go. As Kevin put the Massachusetts in the water it lost control and started to circle. Leif brought his VDT in to shoot up the cripple. The circling Massachusetts soon had Leif pinned against the side of the Allied home port. The Massachusetts sank inside of the port and Leif was able to get his ship back into the pond.

Meanwhile Ty had launched his CVL for the final Allied convoy forward and return runs. The Warspite soon joined the I-boat looking for an Axis warship to sink. They found Chris K's VDT dead in the water near the bridge. They put a few sidemounts into it prop washed it and left it to sink as it drifted into the small pond. The search for another warship was put on hold to chase down Peter's red freighter. There was not much time left in campaign so Peter was taking a direct route to the forward base. Peter made it to the forward base and got in the middle of a multiple ship pushing match. He made it into the Axis port with time still left on his run and had to go out and come back in. His path was blocked by both Axis and Allied ships. The Warspite tried to push a VDT into the red freighter and keep it out of port. But the push only helped Peter complete his run. The Axis had found the Allied targets and shot them all down. The Allies also hit all the of Axis targets.

Campaign was over with a 10,000+ point Allied victory.



The holes of the Axis Not-Best-Of-Scale Freighter (painted Bob-Red) Photo by the Meltons

Friday at Nats:

by Lars



Even though the Allies had a twenty thousand point lead, the Surrender Monkey

still sought out surrender terms. On this day we got to keep our women and children and most of our equipment, I think there was talk of 'used O-rings' and 'rusty bb's'. We decided to fight it out.

Fight was putting it mildly however. The Allied strategy was 'have fun'. The Axis strategy was to seek out revenge in a friendly sort of way. Each fleet started with 21 ships, the Axis had the edge in units with 102.5 to 95.5. Battle was called and the Axis headed for the Allied Admiral, Josh Bruder, murmuring 'Bru-der!, Bru-der!' like a hokey horror movie. Josh had not sunk all week and wanted his record to remain intact, so his ship exited the sortie quickly.

With the Allied admiral gone, the Axis looked for a new target and Bob Hoernemann's Warspite 'was just there.' The Warspite couldn't run away and was pummeled and sunk (4295 pts.)

The Axis next selected Randy Stiponovich's Tiger. Randy had fought for several years as an Axis. The chant became "Ran-dy! Ran-dy!" Randy's Tiger calmly lead the Axis here and there, telling folks he wasn't bothered because he hadn't been sunk at Nats in three years. He eventually succumbed in this one with 2440 pts damage

The Allies were also seeking out Axis, Brandon Smith's Fuso was the only one sunk (1450 pts) in the first sortie.

For the second sortie, the Axis headed for the Admiral once again, but he again escaped quickly, with 1245 pts damage. So the Axis sought out a different Bruder, Josh's father John. John's Barham fought until her guns were empty, and then survived her five with 1505 pts



Parts of the Barham stayed dry despite the shower of Axis attention.

Photo by Lars

damage. Afterwards, John offered to give the Axis another five minutes, but they declined.

After that, the Axis hit team sank several more Allies, but I'm not sure of the order. Doug Hunt's West Virginia (1775 pts), Dana Graham's Des Moines (2655 pts), Kevin Hovis' Missouri (5705 pts), Ty Supancic's I-boat (1880 pts), and Pete Demetri's King George V (4390 pts) were all sunk. I think Dana Graham's cruiser had some strange incident with the paddle boats on the far side of the big pond, but I didn't hear the full story. Jonathan Block, Paul Block's son, took out Ron Horbul's cruiser, and took a hit above and below and sank when he didn't turn on the pump.

For the Allies, their work was lighter, but David Ranier's Littorio (3160 pts) was sunk once again. Todd Olson's Scharnhorst (2580 pts) and Peter Ellison's Scharnhorst (1805) were also sunk. Rick King's Scharnhorst took 1730 pts damage, but did not join her sisters. Gerald Robert's Haruna took 2085 pts damage but stayed afloat as well. The others with high damage were Jeff Lide's Fuso (1400 pts), Chris Au's Strasbourg (1095 pts), Chris

Pearce's Bismark (1200 pts), and Bryan Finster's Nagato (1895 pts).

The Axis won the battle handily at **29,695** to **20,615**.

After the last fleet battle, there was a couple of one-on-ones. But most folks packed up and headed back to the motel to clean up and relax a bit before the evening's festivities.

It was an interesting drive out to the battleship Texas. I'm being paid a large salary to describe it, but it is beyond words. At least for me, that is, I like to try to go for the subtle, low-key descriptions, which doesn't work well in this case at all. Perhaps 'interesting' would be a start, a very small start to describing that drive.

As for the old dreadnought herself, driving into the parking lot felt a lot like driving into an old outdoor drive-in theater, except the image on the screen was huge and three dimensional. All I needed to fulfill the fantasy was the strong smell of popcorn from the concession stand. Unfortunately the gift shop had very little food, but Dawn's cake more than made up for that later.

Crawling around the battleship itself I find very difficult to describe. Climbing the superstructure of a ninety-five year old dreadnought far surpassed climbing that 60 year old ranger tower in Northern Minnesota. They were about the same height but the battleship was more like a jungle gym with stairs every which way, and cool things to bang your head or elbows on if you weren't careful. Below decks I was greatly conflicted because the humidity and smell of the ancient decks and machinery and the uneven floor reminded me greatly of my dad's old potato house where I spent countless hours of sweaty, dirty, and smelly slave labor as a farm kid. It was a big reason why I went into computers for a living. But the below decks were made of steel, and only once did our guide say, 'we can't go there because the deck is weak', whereas dad's potato house had several spots where we were warned constantly not to tread on the rotting wood flooring.

At one point, Dirty Dave, Gerald

Roberts and I lost the rest of the tour when we stopped to read a display in a room. With no one else on the battleship, I'd have thought we'd find the group fairly easy, but we spent about fifteen minutes and checked three different decks, before we ran into them again, on 'the main highway' that went through most of the below-deck area. I would have thought that the footsteps and chatter from 15 people would have echoed from one end to the other, but we heard nothing. I can only think that the rest of the tour had spent the time hiding behind a door with a one way mirror, laughing at the three of us as we got more and more confused.

As for the award banquet itself, the area we ate in was cramped and confined with lots of odd things to bang your head or your shins on. But everyone managed to dance around through the food line and return to their table while Bob H. read off ticket numbers for the door prize drawings. Someone brought a huge set of plans and the constant

un-rolling and re-rolling of these cut off the air-flow for a time, but we had Dawn's chocolate cake and so no one noticed.

Then it was out to the bow of the ship for the awards ceremony. Once again Bob Hoernemann put on a good show as he presented the following awards:

Class 2:	Dave Au
Class 3:	Tom Palmer
Class 4:	Ryan Butler
Class 5:	Rick King
Class 6:	Tim Beckett
Founders Award:	Brian Lamb
Life Line:	Ty Supancic
Best of Class Warship:	

Dana Graham's Prince Of Wales

Best of Scale Convoy:

Steve Reichenbach's Nordmark

Most Feared Axis: Jeff Lide

Most Feared Allied:

Bob Hoernemann

Best Dressed: Wade Koehn

Rookie of the Year: Ryan Butler

Sportsman of the Year:

Brandon Smith

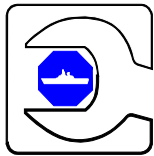


Are those guns scale? How about those award mugs?

Photo supplied by Steve Reichenbach

NATS by the Numbers

by Bob Hoernemann



"Numbers never lie, you can make them say anything you want." What do the numbers say

about NATs this year, let's take a look.

The biggest surprise this year was the fleet that lost got most of the Best of Class awards. In a typical year this does not happen as the winning fleet gets more points each battle. But this year the Axis fleet had fewer units (20 or more) in every battle than the Allies. This gave them fewer units to divide the points between. The top 28 point scores from fleet battles were all Axis ships.

The hit percentage this year was 15.5%, on par with NATs from the past. This means that of all the bbs that get shot during battle only 15.5% make a scored hole in a ship.

The highest amount of aboves in a battle went to Ty's I-boat in the Hug N Slug battle Wednesday, 142. Rick King's Scharny (127) Friday morning and Gerald's Haruna (123) Monday afternoon also had large quantities of aboves. In the same Monday battle Gerald also took the most ons (27). Lars was a close second with 23 in the same battle. Gerald almost made it a clean sweep with 63 belows on Monday afternoon. Kevin Hovis (55) & Bob (54), both Friday morning, could not come close to Gerald's score.

Not surprisingly Gerald had the most total holes in a battle with 217. Ty (175) & Kevin Hovis

(171) were the next closest. David Ranier took 21 belows in each battle Monday am, Monday pm and Tuesday am. He also took 17 belows Friday morning. That is a consistent battler.

Even though Chris Kessler moved to a VDT he still managed to take very little damage. His total score for the week was 84-15-34. Most of that came in a Wednesday pick up battle. Maggie Grossaint has taken over for Chris with a 3-0-0 score in fleet battles during the week. Keeps dad from having to patch more holes. Kevin Hovis took as many holes Friday morning 103-13-55 as he did the rest of the week 99-4-60. Thursday morning his score was 1-0-0. How can a ship that big disappear.

There were 69 sinks during the week. But only 10 were in the first sortie of the fleet battles. Of the 56 fleet battle sinks we have scores for 31 appear to have lighter then normal

damage to sink a ship of that class. Once again about half of the ships sunk go down with systems failures not by taking a lot of battle damage.

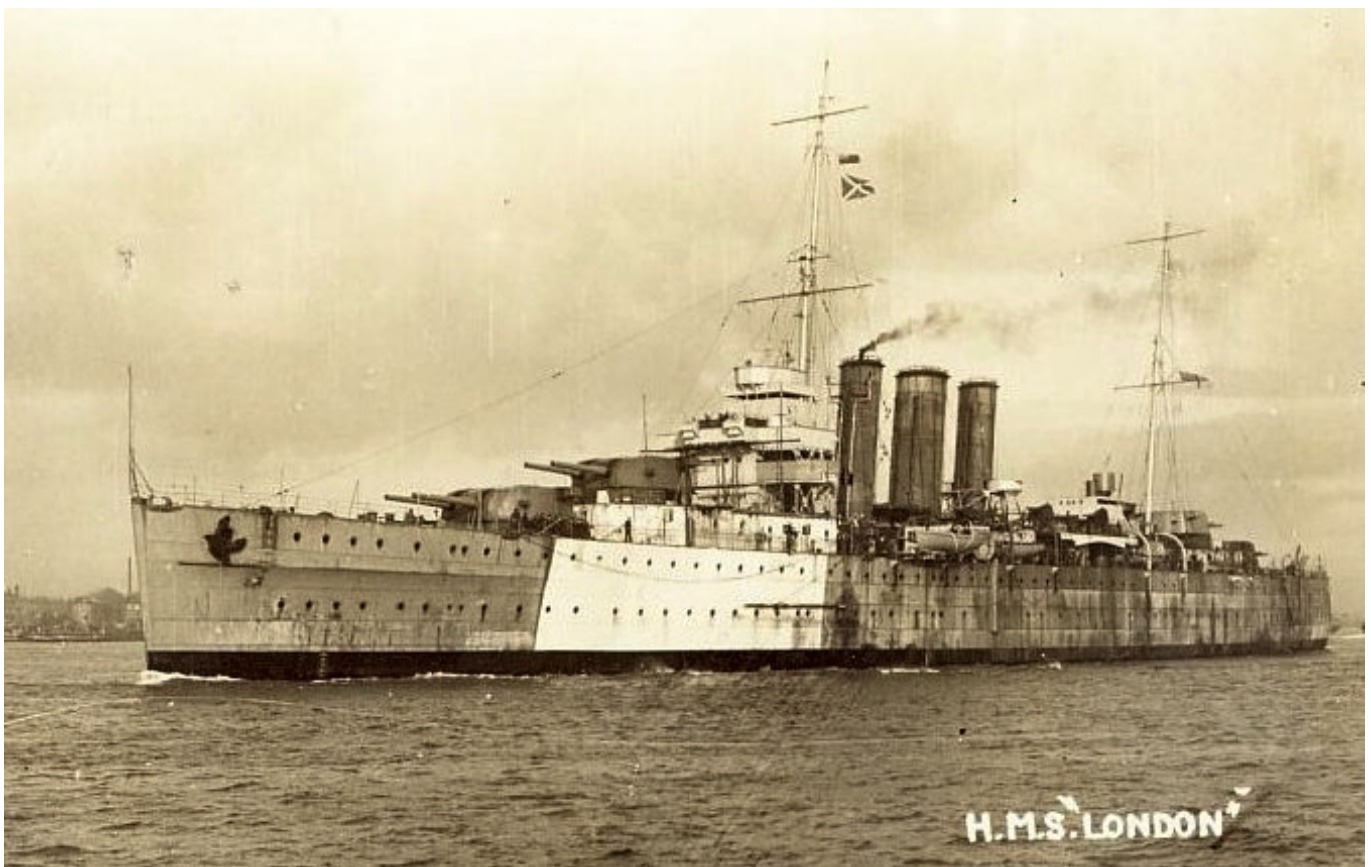
On the drive down to NATs I tried to predict the outcome of NATs by taking the average damage each battler has taken the in the last 5 NATs to see what fleet would score more points. Captains who have not been to a NATs or who were bringing a new ship were given a score in comparison to another captain with the same type of ship. This formula predicted the Allies would win NATs by 11,700 points. The Allies actually won by 9,430 points. Looking at it this way the prediction was close to what really happened. But the prediction only looked at fleet battles not campaign. On paper the Allies should have won each fleet battle by 2,200 points. There was not a battle during the week that came close to this number. Bringing us back to the "Numbers never lie" theory.



Tim Beckett's Bismarck sinks Photo by the Meltons



Maggie Grossaint and her cruiser, Dana Graham, and Chris Grossaint Photo by the Meltons

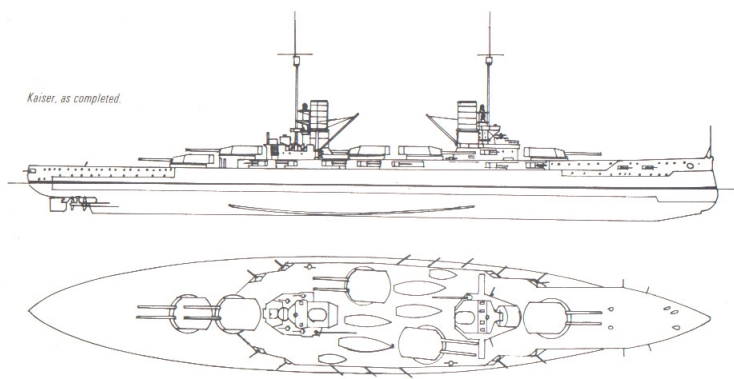


After a rough day of fleet battles the day before, HMS London sports a new balsa patch panel. Note the finely detailed portholes.

TASK FORCE 144

1486 Oakdale Ave.

West St. Paul, MN 55118



Once more may I remind you that you have beaten most of the enemy's fleet already; and, once defeated, men do not meet the same dangers with their old spirit. - Phormio, to Athenian Navy, 429 BC