

TF144

TASK FORCE 144

The Official Newsletter of Model
Warship Combat, Inc.

www.mwci.org

FALL 2013

Volume 2013, Issue 1



Inside this issue:

Nationals 2013	2
NATS 2013 - Monday	3
NATS Voting	9



Fall 2013

Model Warship Combat, Inc.

Volume 2013, Issue 1

This Quarter in History:

September 4, 1923: In Lakehurst, New Jersey, the first American airship, the USS Shenandoah, takes to the sky for the first time.

September 6, 1923: The Italian navy occupies Corfu in retaliation for the murder of an Italian officer. The League of Nations protests and they leave on September 29.

September 8, 1923: Honda Point Disaster: Seven U.S. Navy destroyers run aground off the California coast.

October 16, 1913: HMS Queen Elizabeth launched at Portsmouth Dockyard as the first oil-fired battleship.

October 28, 1943: Alleged date of the Philadelphia Experiment, in which the destroyer escort USS Eldridge (DE-173) was supposed to be rendered invisible to human observers for a brief period.

November 11, 1923: Adolf Hitler is arrested for his leading role in the Beer Hall Putsch, two days after the Putsch was crushed by the government.

November 16, 1943: A Japanese submarine sinks the surfaced U.S. submarine USS Corvina (SS-226) near Chuuk Lagoon (Truk).

November 23, 1923: Gustav Stresemann's coalition government collapses in Germany.

Inside this issue:

Nationals 2013 **2**

NATS 2013 - Monday **3**

NATS Voting **9**



MWCI Nationals; Allied Victory!

Well, congratulations to all those captains who battled their ships at the National Competition in Houston, TX this summer! (I hear the copper that was added to the pond for algae gave everyone's electronics real problems - you all deserve commendations for keeping them running). The results are back and the final tallies were:

Axis 175990 : Allies 178070

Margin of allied victory was 2080. Allied Admiral Pete Demetri over Axis Admiral Brandon Smith!

Continued on next page...

UPCOMING EVENTS:

30 AUG - 02 SEP: LARK DIVE TRAVAGANZA, Rosenberg, TX
Contact: John Ferl, johnferl@yahoo.com

31 AUG - 02 SEP: BUZZARD BLAST, Hinckley, OH
Contact: Chris Au, chris.au@att.net
Sanctioned

14 SEP - 16 SEP: FALL BB FLING, Fletcher Memorial Park, Statesboro, GA
Contact: Brian Koehler, bkoehler@georgiasouthern.edu
Unsanctioned

21 SEP - 22 SEP: ICE BREAKER, Lake Susan Park, Chanhassen, MN
Contact: Bob Hoernemann, r_hoernemann@hotmail.com
Sanctioned

Board of Directors:

President:

Tom Palmer Region II

Vice President:

Pete Demetri Region III

Secretary:

Brian Eliassen Region V

Treasurer:

Bob Region I
Hoernemann

Boardmember:

Peter Ellison Region I

Boardmember:

Chris Au Region II

Boardmember:

Dave Ranier Region III

Boardmember:

Brian Lamb Region IV

Boardmember:

Chris Pearce Region IV

Boardmember:

Brandon Smith Region IV

Editor:

Steven Cox

cox.steven@gmail.com

Please add [TF144] to Beginning of Email Subject Line!

Some of the Recognitions made for this year's NATS

Founders: Fleugel, Bismarck

Best of class 6: Jeff Lide, Mutsu

BOC 5: Johnny Adams, Baden

BOC 4: John Stangle, Westfalen

BOC 3: Matthew Larson, Indianapolis

BOC 2: Randy Stiponovich, Glorie

Life Line: Ted Beuring

Individual Combatant: Randy, Glorie

Most Damaged: Lief Goodson, Bismarck - 22,135; or 646a, 43o, 148b

Sportsman: Doug Hunt

Best Dressed: Fleugel

Best of scale Convoy: Ty's Freightor

Best of scale warship: Brian Lamb, Vanguard

Rookie of the Year: Matthew Larson, Indianapolis

Most Feared Axis: John Stangle, Westfalen

Most Feared Allied: Tim Beckett, Vanguard

MWCI 2013 Nationals - Monday, by Mike Mangus

Saturday

One would figure that the months leading up to a national event would be plenty of time to prepare a ship for battle.

Apparently, not enough time for me though. Heh. The week beforehand after a less than stellar performance with the brand new Vanguard in Ohio, I decided on the trip home to shelve the Vandy and prep a previously battled and reliable ship for the Nats. The only choices were the HMS Erin which needed a substantial refit after two years of hard battling and the DKN Scharnhorst used briefly for a couple battles since last fall. Determining that the Erin needed too much work to complete, attention turned to the Scharnhorst. Of course, trying to recommission and re-sheet an empty ship hull took time, which is why it was stuffed into the car Sunday morning lacking paint, waterline, and a rather beat up superstructure.

The 10 hour drive was uneventful for the most part. After crossing in Texas and seeing a 75 mph speed limit sign on a two-lane road, I thought someone was setting up a speed zone to catch speeders lulled by the high speed limit sign. It took a few more signs before figuring out that perhaps Texas really did have what seemed an insane speed limit for such a small road. For the first time in ages, the speed control was actually set at the speed limit instead of 5 mph over.

It was early evening upon checking into the hotel and driving around back to unload the car. The first thing I saw coming in the door was a group of familiar faces hanging out and chatting. Greetings were traded amongst all as friends renewed friendships from last year.

MWCI NATIONALS—MONDAY

Then came the question, “What did you bring?”. “Scharnhorst”, I replied. Bob H then said something like, “Thought it might be that.”, as if he wasn’t surprised at all. This was a disappointment because I had told a select few people of the ship switch and swore them to secrecy with the intent of surprising the Allied fleet command. Unfortunately, it looks like Allied intelligence caught wind of the attempted subterfuge. Bleah.

Not all Allied captains had heard though. In the front lobby while gathering up to go out to eat, Tom P asked the same question. Upon hearing the ship was the Scharnhorst, he had this astonished “are you kidding me?” look. Thanks Tom. That made my day.

After checking in and chatting with the Region 3 guys and grabbing dinner, I retired to the room to get to work on the ships for Sunday testing.

Sunday

Up at the gawd awful hour of 7 am, I loaded the ships, got breakfast, and headed out to the premier battling site of the H&H Ranch. There was a lot of work to do in getting the Scharnhorst and Vichy Verite PDN ready and tested. The Scharnhorst was floated tested, waterline applied, and speed checked without a single issue. The drop test went fine with the first drop failing. That gave a momentary fright since the sheeting had received a layer of the replacement tissue material for testing. Turns out the drop had hit a rib. Phew. The remaining tests went fine with the Scharnhorst just under its max weight ... something that would change later in the week.

With the Scharnhorst done, attention turned to the Verite. If the Scharnhorst was barely finished in time, then the Verite was in dire straits. The new brushless motor and pump had been tossed into the hull to make sure they made it to Houston. Luckily, the Verite needed only an hour to get the new motor and pump installed and electronics checked out before going on the water for a speed test. It went well for the most part although the little ship seemed to submerge more than usual. Usually I can tell if the Verite is on speed by how far the water flows back over the bow. If the water wash starts touching the front barrette, then the ship is normally on its 28 second speed. For some reason though, once it was on speed the bow wash was reaching midway back over the deck. I didn’t give it much more thought and let it go, a decision that would almost cost the ship during the Monday campaign.

Sometime during the day a cheer went up from shore. Apparently the only other predread entered in the Nats had sunk during a speed run. The Axis captains in attendance saluted the Allied sink with a congratulatory “Banzai!”.

Packing up after a long day, I made arraignments with Jeff and Mark L to meet at Whataburger. Unfortunately, we ended up going to different locations. Ah well. The food was still excellent even if the large drink was unexpectedly bed-wetting sized.

Back at the hotel, the Axis met to go over Nats strategies. As a first time Axis captain, I kinda expected something like, “Blah blah blah ... Banzai! Banzai! Banzai!”. What I actually heard was the Axis Admiral Brandon outlining sound strategies for the upcoming Monday battles. His goal was not only to win Nats but to dominate campaign. Oh, there was a few “Banzai!” also. Heh.

Dinner was with a mostly Allied crew at the local Pappas BBQ eatery. Mmm ... really good food there!

Monday Morning Fleet Battle, First Sortie

Waking up early was not a problem on Monday morning. Excitement got the blood pumping and feet moving to get the car loaded and driving out to the pond. There was a buzz in the air as people talked and prepped ships for the upcoming fleet battle. Finally the call came to move ships to the water.

The Axis launched in the small end of the pond to the left of the dividing bridge. The Allies launched in the big end of the pond on the right side of the dividing bridge. From what others have said, this is the normal way of things at an H&H Ranch Nationals.

MWCI NATIONALS—MONDAY

What was not normal were the Allied small boats launching on the right side along with the Allied big ships. The expectation was the Allied small boats would launch like aways on the far left side behind the Axis fleet. That they didn't do as expected tossed a monkey wrench into the Axis planning which was designed to deal with the small boats. So instead, the Axis boats detailed to harry the Allied small boats took up supporting positions mid-small pond side.

Finally, it was time. With the cry to start the battle, the 2013 Nationals had begun!

Like usual (so I am told), the Axis big boats and the Allied big boats formed a stern-first line on each side of the bridge. The Japanese ships held the forefront with the German ships further behind in another line. The Allied line looked to be mostly NCs and Vanguard's supported by the vicious medium Allied ships. The two fleets waved sterns at each other as if daring a foolish captain to attack.

This went on for at least a good 5 minutes, if not longer, until an Allied cruiser decided to squirt through under the bridge into the Axis side only to be met by the Bismarcks captained by Fluegal and Lief G. They made short work of the cruiser to send it to the bottom.

Not long afterwards (or maybe about the same time), The Westfallen captained by John S drove under the bridge to mix it up with the Allied ships. Now if there is a ship and captain capable of taking the fight against multiple Allied ships and survive, it would be John and the Westfallen. The little ship twisted and turned this way and that, dealing out shots while trying to avoid getting hit and all the while causing chaos and confusion in the Allied battleship line. The Japanese ships edged in to take advantage and get their licks in. Soon enough, both lines started creeping towards the near shore under the bridge to get in on the action.

This left a hole under the bridge on the far side. Deciding it was time to put the Scharnhorst into action and plug that hole before the Vanguard (Brian L I think) could move in, I backed under the bridge and put the starboard stern quarter against the bridge shore piling on the Allied side. This helped protect the German ship's weak quarter while keeping the deadly haymaker open for any Allied ship brave enough to fancy a dual. Of course, the Vanguard was ready to dance.

We jockeyed sterns back and forth, forward and back, both ships looking for the best opportunity to deal damage. I was wary of the dime size holes the Vanguard's dual haymakers were reportedly making at the Tangler. The Vanguard seemed just as cautious, probably knowing the rate of fire that the Scharnhorst's haymaker was capable of.

Finally it happened. Both ships backed far enough to start firing! As I was ramping up the fire rate, someone from the other shore called out, "Get him, Mike!". Heh. The exchange was a brief few seconds though ... I probably only fired around half a magazine. Both ships broke off. Figuring it might be wise to check how much damage the Vanguard might have done, I pulled the Scharnhorst back to the German side and flicked on the pump. Hmm ... hardly pumping at all. Still, it might be wise to flick on the second pump before reengaging.

As the ship started backing back under the bridge to pick up the fight, disaster struck. The Scharnhorst lost all power and went dead on the water. After calling "5 out of control", I reset the radio and got a brief burst of power enough to run the pump for a few seconds before it went dead again. That impulse was enough to start a drift that ended up putting the ship against the shore pilings under the bridge. All I could do was watch helplessly as the ship started to get lower and lower in the water.

Oddly enough, no Allied ships took advantage of the stranded German ship. Perhaps the threat of the nearby Japanese ships deterred the Allies from taking a chance at possibly free points.

Needless to say, I was unhappy with the ship sinking. It took about 10 minutes to recover the ship, clear the guns, and put it back on the bench before I could go back and watch the battle.

By this time, the bridge lines had broken up and the battle fully engaged. A Bismarck (Lief?) has crossed into the Allied side of the pond and was mixing it up with the Allied big ships.

MWCI NATIONALS—MONDAY

Jeff L's Mutsu was withdrawing deeper into the small side with both pumps moving a bit of water. That must have been some battle he was in!

Weeks later, it is difficult to remember everything that happened. The impression though is the Allies had done very well (as born out in the scores for the first fleet battle). Both sides had first sortie sinks, though for the Allies it was only cruisers compared to the bigger Axis sinks. The Axis also had three big ships pumping fairly hard at the end of the first sortie.

Afterwards, I inspected the area where the Vanguard's duals had hit and found 2 holes plus two rib hits. The Vanguard had about a dozen holes above the waterline where the Scharnhorst's haymaker was obviously too close to the enemy ship.

Monday Morning Fleet Battle, Second Sortie

Out for this sortie, I got the watch the battle.

The Allies launched on the large side of the pond and the Axis launched on the small side as usual. Most unusual was the Axis not lining up on the bridge. Instead, the Axis big ships stayed deep in the small end where there was more room to move while the small Axis ships positioned themselves halfway in between. Seemed we (the Axis) finally decided to not defend the bridge as instructed by our Admiral during the Sunday Axis meeting.

This seemed to confuse the Allied big ships who had lined up, stern first, at the Allied side of the bridge. For some minutes after battle start was called, the Allied ships stayed in place with sterns pointing at open water. There were no Axis ships to shoot at.

Among the very last to launch was Jeff L. His Mutsu had taken significant damage in the first sortie. With seconds to spare he launched before battle start was called. A minute later he dumped his cannons and called 5. The Allies immediately called out, "Jeff is dumping his cannons!". The call seemed to fall on deaf ears since no Allied ship made the move to cross under the bridge and go after the Mutsu. Jeff made it off five without an Allied in sight.

Finally, a Vanguard led a group of NCs under the bridge and into the small pond where they engaged the Axis small boats. A nice little fight started that slowed the Allied advance to deal with the Axis small ships.

Yet the big Axis targets were deep in the small end of the pond. Seeing the real targets sitting unmolested, the Vanguard flanked the battle to drive straight at the pumping Bismarcks. One by one the NCs broke free to follow while the Allied small ships moved in to take their place.

With both fleets fully engaged in such a smallish area, it was difficult to see all the action as it happened. Even so, there were a few notable events.

Pete D's KGV slowly drifted under the bridge into the Axis side. Johnny's Baden, seeing the apparently sleeping ship, started moving in. The KGV suddenly seemed to realize the danger and started moving, but not before the Baden's haymaker opened up and left a string of holes that started above the waterline and trailed down and forward below the waterline. Later, I asked Pete what happened. He related that he lost sight of the ship while crossing over the bridge and hadn't realized it had drifted so far. He found it just in time to prevent the Baden from really laying into it.

Over in the big boat battle, Fluegal's dual pumped Bismarck twisted and turned as it first dealt damage then trying to avoid more damage while on five, all the while relentlessly pursued by the Vanguards. A timely man-in-the-water helped the steadily pumping Bismarck survive its five.

The Vanguard then turned their considerable attention upon Lief's Bismarck which was pumping nearly as hard as Fluegal's ship. Lief fought right up until the decks went awash to show the die fighting spirit of the Axis fleet.

Overall, everyone felt that the Allies had handily taken the first fleet battle. Scores proved the feeling right.

Axis: 29060

Allied: 37015

MWCI NATIONALS—MONDAY

A postmortem on the Scharnhorst turned up a burned out ESC on the forward pump due to using a high kv motor on a 12.8 volt system. The motor was replaced with the Verite's milder pump while the Verite got the Scharnhorst's forward pump with a new ESC attached.

Monday Afternoon Campaign

Both teams held last minute meetings to plot strategy before putting ships on the water. Most of the Axis warships started the battle on the water while Allies seemed to have a few less at the beginning, probably planning on running convoys all hour long.

The Scharnhorst was delegated to defend the Axis targets in place of the previously assigned Bismarck. In this the battle cruiser was well suited by virtue of twin pumps and respected cannons. Even so that did not stop the Allied cruisers and PDN from trying. At one time, I had five Allied cruisers and Bob H's Radetzkey maneuvering around the Scharnhorst trying to get at the targets. They had moderate success; after all the Scharnhorst is a big ship with a single prop and did not have the acceleration of the smaller ships. Still, the Scharnhorst was enough threat to make them somewhat cautious.

The Allies launched a couple convoy ships that were quickly dispatched by the numerous Axis warships on the water. Of all of the Allied convoys launched during campaign, only two made the forward run and one made the return ship.

On the Axis side, Jeff L and Lief G were contemplating convoy runs with the tiny Axis convoy ships. Jeff's little ship really seemed to be having an issue as he set it into the water (of which the Allies started calling out "Axis convoy on the water!"). He eyed the small ship critically and picked it up to fix an apparent list. After puttering with the tiny ship, he finally launched it right before the first 20 minute mark to avoid taking a penalty. As the greedy Allied warships moved in on the diminutive convoy ship, Jeff suddenly declared it sunk to give the Allies 100 points.

Over at the Axis targets, the swarmed Scharnhorst finally got some help with the arrival of the Westfallen and I think Gerald's ship. The Axis ships communicated well to stymie the Allied cruisers who seemingly started to drift away, probably to reload.

Around the 30 minute mark, Jeff L suddenly started yelling, "Tora! Tora! Tora!" with a few Banzai and whoops tossed into the mix. Not sure what the Allies thought of the commotion considering that Jeff has done the like before.

For the Axis it was a prearranged signal. Suddenly Axis ships were attacking anything that moved or was calling 5 to get off the water. It did not matter if the target was another warship, convoy, or targets. The Axis went into a flurry of activity. By the 35 minute mark most of the Axis warships were either on 5 or coming off the water.

During this time the first of Yamatos was launched followed soon by the second ship. With 6 forward facing cannons, the ships were deadly convoy killers known for literally blowing huge holes in any ship unfortunate enough to cross their path.

Back over at the Axis targets, the "Tora! Tora! Tora!" signal made me happy. Finally I can really turn the Scharnhorst loose. And look! Here comes a Vanguard! Yummy! When the Scharnhorst's bow cannon opened up on the Vanguard's bow area, the captain (sorry, I keep forgetting which is which) commented that it was useless to shoot at the big ship. A fellow Axis behind us cracked me up by replying, "Yeah, but you still have to patch it."

Just about the time I was planning on calling five to get off the water, the Scharnhorst's drive system died. This time the pumps seemed to stay running as the Vanguard muscled and pinned the battle cruiser up against the PVC barricade pipe protecting the targets. I called five, totally unconcerned that the Vanguard was now trying to propwash the Scharnhorst under. I even said so to the Vanguard captain with "There is no way you will propwash the Scharnhorst down." Two minutes later with an NC joining in washing the decks, the Scharnhorst suddenly sank.

After campaign, the Vanguard captain said he was as surprised that the German ship sank. Apparently neither of us saw it coming.

MWCI NATIONALS—MONDAY

It took around 10 minutes to finally recover the ship and get it back on the bench. In the meantime, phase two of the Axis campaign strategy launched ... literally launched. Just before the 40 minute mark, the Axis launches a half dozen convoy ships followed minutes later by a second wave of convoy ships. Mixed in with the two waves are a couple warships (convoy ships with pumps) with orders to “lame duck” and draw fire. It was a mass confusion of convoy ships scattering across the pond to make it even harder for the remaining Allied warships to hunt them down.

The convoy blitz works famously. In the mass confusion, all but two of the Axis convoy ships make the forward run only to be emptied and immediately relaunched for return runs ... directly into the incoming second wave of Axis convoys. Wait, which of those convoys was making the return trip again? Heh.

The Axis make enough return runs to not only offset the Scharnhorst and a Yamato sink, but to make up a good amount of points lost during the morning drubbing.

Getting the wet Scharnhorst settled on the bench and hoofing it over to the far pavilion in 90+ degree weather (who put the darn Axis home port way the heck over here?! Heh.), I power up the Verite and launch. Seeing the Allied targets are all down, the Verite makes the long trip to the Allied home port to await an Allied convoy launch. During the long trip is when the Verite nearly sinks as it takes on a boat load of water over the bow and into the not-as-good-as-it-used-to-be deck seal. For the rest of the campaign I stop and let the Verite pump out frequently. Luckily, none of the Allies notices the pre-dreadnaught's difficulties.

The Allies finally launch a convoy ship. As its stern clears the port I start a timer on it. The Verite moves into position so by the time the timer hits 30 seconds the stern cannons are on target and open fire. Immediately the convoy captain calls foul saying that the 30 seconds had not expired. Must have been a slow stop watch. I leave the convoy ship alone and sail away after an Allied cruiser that looks low in the water. Before even getting close, the cruiser's stern slips under the water just as it's five expires.

Campaign is winding down with only around 10 minutes left. Spying the earlier Allied convoy ship now making its way around the pond, I send the Verite after it. It takes a while to catch up due to having to stop and make sure the little ship isn't driving itself under. Luckily there is another Axis ship hounding and slowing the convoy ship and its escort. We work on the enemy ships with the Verite finally getting a short string of stern shots on it. Eventually the convoy succumbs to the accumulated damage and slips under the waves.

I do a stop and go trip to the far side of the big pond and eventually find an LST driven by Chris (I think) Au on its return trip. Now if you have ever seen an LST in the hands of a competent captain, they are tough targets to hit. Au is a master of the tiny nimble turning ship. Along with a Vanguard providing escort it is difficult to attack. Even so, the Verite is a half decent turning ship that finally manages to out accelerate the bigger ship and turn out to empty the remaining stern ammo into the LST. The Vanguard quickly moves in to chase the PDN away which leads to another running maneuvering session as I try to get back in.

Eventually the LST pulls ahead of the maneuvering Vandy and Verite. Seeing a chance, I send in the Verite on the attack and manage to position the little ship off the LST's starboard side just out of bow sidemount range. The LST captain helpfully warns that the little ship will do “strange maneuvers” if within three feet. Thanks for the warning! Now I have wanted to take on an LST with the Verite for some time now. The LST has near godlike turning ability especially in the hands of someone like Au. The Verite is not near as good turning but has a speed advantage. It is perfectly positioned to try to dodge the LST if it turns in for a push attack. If so, I plan on reversing while shooting as fast as possible before the touch then slink off to shore to wait out the 30 seconds.

The LST does exactly opposite. It turns away. The Verite accelerates and turns in with bow sidemount leading and gets off a good string of hits. The LST pivots and its stern JUST misses the now reversing Verite's bow by less than an inch. I break off to get sea room away from the dangerous little LST. By the time I loop around for another attack, the LST is noticeably lower in the water and nearly stopped dead. Just to make sure the convoy ship doesn't survive, the Verite is sent in for a bow sidemount pass to ensure the ship sinks a moment later.

All in all, that little skirmish with the LST and Vandy was the most enjoyable part of my Nats.

MWCI NATIONALS—MONDAY

Calling five, I await for the end of campaign with the sense that the Axis not only won it but won it big.

Axis: 10900

Allied: 4200

Monday Totals:

Axis: 39960

Allies: 41215

That is Monday in a somewhat long nutshell and from a first time Axis battler perspective. Some of the events are a distortion of my viewpoint and may be remembered differently by other combatants. If so, I would be glad to hear the stories.

NATS 2013 Voting

Rules 1-7 did not pass. The voting was as follows:

- 1: 9-22 (Rudder alignment requirement)
- 2: 10-21 (Remove pump motor size restrictions)
- 3: 7-24 (Allow class 1/2 & 1 spurt reload)
- 4: 11-20 (class 3 and lower cosmetic barrel requirement)
- 5: 13-18 (Extend battlecruiser unit table)
- 6: 9-22 (Allow DKM Lutzow three cannons)
- 7: 10-21 (Expand local and regional battle rules)
- 8: 17-7 (Three sidemounts for shorter BCs)

Some people did not pick up their copy of the separate ballot for rule 8, both were on the table at the banquet. There were 31 ballots collected for rules 1-7 and 24 for Rule 8.

In next quarters edition:

- Hopefully more well written articles on the rest of NATS.
- Building and Construction Articles

If you know of an event in the next Quarter (December-February) that took place in 1913, 1923, 1933 or 1943 for December and 1914, 1924, 1934 and 1944 for January and February and would like to see it in this Quarter in History. Please send me the information to cox.steven@gmail.com.

