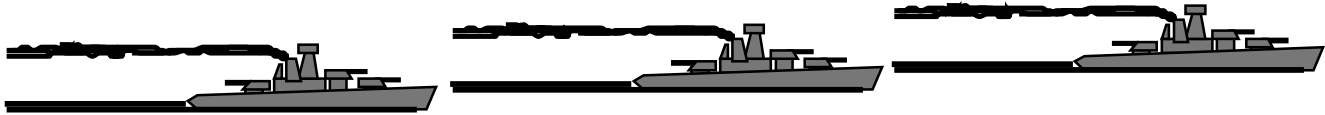


# TASK FORCE 144



The Official Newsletter of Model Warship Combat, Inc.

[www.mwci.org](http://www.mwci.org)

Summer – 2008



## CALENDAR OF MWC EVENTS

**July 13-18, 2008**  
**NATS 2008**

Veterans Lake  
Ramsey, MN

**Site Hosts:** Bob Hoernemann, Ron  
Horbul (contact info on BOD page)

**Motel:** Country Inn & Suites, Elk  
River, MN. (888) 201-1746 or  
763-241-6990. Group rate is  
\$80/night. Note: the motel's price is  
arranged for Friday, July 11 through  
Saturday, July 19, so there should be  
no problem with those who like to  
stay Saturday night. Mention  
"MWCI" when reserving. Must  
reserve by May 31. If mailing items,  
contact Ron Horbul. Sanctioned

**July 26, 2008**

**Scrap July Battle**

Prado Lake,  
Chino, CA

Contact: Ty Supancic  
hmswarspite at gmail.com  
Sanctioned.

**Sept 13-14, 2008**  
**Fall Fray**

Ritter Springs Park,  
Springfield, MO

Contact: Kevin Kaminski  
kevin@ernesttees.com  
Sanctioned

**Sept 13-14, 2008**  
**California Regionals**

Arthur Lake, Arthur, CA

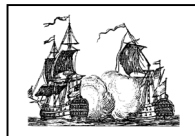
Contact: Brandon Smith  
(contact info on BOD page)  
Sanctioned



The Memorial Day battle is always a mix of old and new ships.

photos supplied by Bob Hoernemann

## The Tangler at Engler by Bob Hoernemann



The annual Memorial Day weekend battle was held this year in a new location. Kevin Kaminski found a pond in Farmington in Engler Park. The pond is called Thomas Lake; it's not much of a lake but makes for a good battling pond. It would be large enough for a NATS, about the same size as the Coco Beach pond. It has a gradual drop from the shore into the water. It is chest deep out to 90' from shore and gets to be 8' in the middle of the

pond. There is a small island and bridge at the far side of the pond that forms a small bay. We did not do any battling on that side of the pond. Opposite of the island is a small channel for slow ships to go hide in. A few patches of weeds were found in the bay and the channel, keeping us out of those areas. In the main battling area there was also a small patch of weeds that some battlers used as a safe area when on five. Others were run into it and became trapped for the hungry sharks to feed on. There are lots of shade trees to set your tables up under just a short walk from the parking lot.

Most people arrived at the hotel



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Friday afternoon, I rode down with Peter Ellison. We got to the pond around 4pm to check it out. When we arrived at the hotel we were greeted by Randy Stiponovich who made it in from Colorado that morning. We were joined by Rick Whitsell and Tom Palmer from KC. Then we met John Stangle from Louisiana. We all jumped into cars and headed out to dinner at a bar/restaurant across the freeway. Later that evening we found Kevin (our host) and Jim Kaminski. Mark Roe, Chris and Dave Au snuck in from Michigan some time that evening. Tom Henchal & Tyler Heland had to leave Minneapolis later in the day and did not get in until midnight.

Saturday was looking like a good battling day, light wind, some clouds and temps in the low 70s. There was a chance of showers later in the day. What would a battle be without some rain?

Everyone set up and the fleets were split into Flag and No Flag.

The Flag Fleet would be:

Bob Hoernemann	Washington
Tom Henchel	St Louis
Tom Palmer	West Virginia
Randy Stiponovich	Glorie
Chris Au	Haruna
Kevin Kaminski	Graf Spee
Peter Ellison	TMGBC

The No Flag Fleet was set up as:

Kevin Hovis	Missouri
Mark Roe	VDT
Rick Whitsell	Salt Lake City
John Stangle	Scharnhorst

Jim Kaminski	The Bike
Dave Au	Nagato
Tyler Heland	Minneapolis

Battle started with Chris and I going after John's Scharny. We chased him around the near shore. Dave came into help a few times but could not prevent the Scharny from taking the plunge. Mark and Tom were slugging it out in the corner of the pond and were pestered by the cruisers that came into play. Dave was tangling with Peter and every few passes with Chris and I. We headed off to chase the Mo around. Kevin was having some gun problems and kept us at arms length. Tom H had lost rudder control of the St Louis. He parked himself in the weeds and Dave gave him a few shots. Dave must have felt mercy for Tom, since it was his very first battle and took a few shots then left him alone.

Near the end of the sortie the Bike driver, Jim, being a rookie, thought when he was out of bbs it was time to park near shore and not get shot at. Chris had plenty of sidemounts left and put most of them into the starboard side of The Bike. You could stick three fingers in the hole below the water line he was able to make.

We had Jim and John patch the belows and come back in for the second sortie. Chris and I started off after the Mo but again had to chase and quickly grew tired and found some other things to play with. Dave and Peter were tangling near the



The Bike introduces Jim Kaminski to Davy Jone's Locker.

weeds. Peter emptied his guns and pulled into the weeds to find some safety. Dave was not interested in following him at this time. Tom again lost rudder control and spun around the pond in a big circle.

Meanwhile Chris and I had found a cruiser that was a little slower than normal. Rick did not get the ESC up to speed and had a long reverse delay. He quickly became the meat in a cruiser sandwich, sinking near shore. Mark had managed to put enough holes into the We Vee to also put her down. As the We Vee sank Mark got his VDT in perfect position to fire a few stern gun shots into Tom's bow as it came out of the water. The spectators were impressed and Mark is pretty sure he scored some below shots in that pass.

Suddenly the quiet of the morning was shattered with a loud bang and the hiss of leaking CO2. Randy's Glorie had blown a main hose. The magazine explosion blew out a panel near the step deck of the light cruiser. It was quickly taking on water. Randy managed to back it into the weeds and grab it just before it sank.

I was now out of bbs and on 5, but the Au brothers still had a few left. I tried to help Chris get shots into Dave which was fine with Dave because it gave him something to shoot at. With about a minute left on my 5 I cut Dave off and his pointy bow made a big hole in my bow. We decided it was not worth patching and continuing battle so we all pulled our ships off the water. Turns out Dave had a whole 3 bbs left.

**Scores for the Flags:**

Washington	22-5-21
St Louis	22-8-15
We Vee (sink)	84 10 21
Glorie (sink)	0-0-0
Haruna	4-4-14
Graf Spee	4-4-14
TMGBC	36-4-19

**No Flags**

MO	63-14-12
VDT	14-3-7

Salt Lake City (sink)	34-12-32
Scharny (sink)	73-15-15
The Bike (sink)	11-4-31
Nagato	40-8-11
Mpls	6-1-1
It was a big Flag victory: 11485 to 8920.	

The afternoon battle saw the addition of James Foster with the Andrea Doria to the Flag fleet. Randy traded the Glorie for his Tiger, Kevin H put the MO away and took out my Montcalm, Peter (The Flag Admiral) jumped fleets and went No Flag, Tom H also traded over to the No Flags. Rick Whitsell sat out and took photos. Some of the trading took place after the first and second sorties.

The St Louis had been having weird radio interference and was losing rudder control. We traced the problem to the rudder servo and the extension cable. The cable was new last year and did not show any signs of corrosion or high ohms in the wire. Must be another cursed wire.

The weather started to look bad after lunch. Tom H had his iPhone along and checked out the local radar. We had some light showers moving in so we set up the tents. It had also got a lot colder for the guys who were wet. A few of them went back to the hotel over lunch to grab some warm or dryer clothes.

The first sortie of the afternoon battle had everyone off to a different target from the first battle.

Chris and I worked on the Scharny team. Peter got shot up pretty bad and hid out in the weeds. Randy was brave enough to slide into the weeds and try to put

him under. But Peter made it off his 5 before he sank. John sank later in the battle. Kevin H managed to drive the Montcalm under with only a couple holes in it. Not sure if he forgot to turn on the pump or just turned too sharp. Tyler also had the Mpls sunk with light damage. Chris and I got him in a sandwich and drove him under near the end of the sortie. The three slow ships (Tom P, James and Mark) spent their time slugging it out in the corner of the pond.

The second sortie had John and Tyler patched and back in. Chris and I went in to finish off Peter, he went down early in the sortie. As Peter sank I asked Chris if we should try to sink Dave. He asked me how much damage I wanted to take. We took a few passes on him then Chris found the Bike again and opened up another big hole on the starboard side. He also found the St Louis stuck in some weeds and finished her off. Kevin H drove the Montcalm under a second time, might be why he always has the big ships.

As we finished up the sortie the sun started to come out and warm things up. We decided that we could do a third sortie before it was time to head back to the hotel. All the ships that could still float headed out on



Tom Henchel is tickled to earn his captain's bars.



the water again. Peter took the Montcalm out this time as Kevin H wanted to get home and try to fix his guns. In this battle I thought it would be a good idea to tangle with Mark's VDT. Well, I knew it was a bad idea but it was the third sortie so what could it hurt. The first pass I made was very bad. Mark jumped on me and hit me with a lot of stern sidemount shots before I backed away. I was already starting to pump pretty hard. We traded a few more shots and I started to pump some more.

The Montcalm was out of control backing into the middle of the pond. Not wanting to try and find it in the deeper water Peter dove in and swam after it. Using his high school swimming talent he quickly caught it and started to bring it back. We were cheering him on yelling for him to do the breast stroke, and then the butterfly. This took quite a bit of time and I thought I would run down my battery pretty fast since I was pumping hard the whole time. When Peter finally got out of the water Mark and Dave came by to finish me off. This part of the battle turned in my favor and I was able to get a couple good stern salvos into the Nagato. Chris and I also had several good sidemount passes on the VDT. Mark was pumping really hard now and was sinking as he drove into shore. It was a small victory for me as Mark sank before I did. I was sure I was going to sink.

Dave still had bbs left and now Randy and Tyler came over to get their bbs into me too. Tyler was able to line up on my port side and put a ton of stern guns into me. I was staying very still trying to only move a little to mess up Dave's shots. I was not that worried about the stern guns as I was worried about his nasty sidemounts. I sat there and pumped, just small movements as my 5 counted down, slowly. I was as surprised as anyone that I made it off 5 without sinking. I touched the ship and then drove it hard next to shore



Bob's new Washington tests her super secret weed blocker damage control.

and it still did not sink. Up at the table everyone checked out the damage to the ships. The Washington, VDT and Nagato had taken a beating. We found a weed plugging a large hole below the waterline on Washington, I'm sure that helped keep her afloat.

**Scores for Flags:**

Washington	79-20-55
Montcalm (Kevin) (sink)	0-0-3
We Vee.	61-8-10
Haruna	46-1-13
Graf Spee	58-4-10
Andrea Doria	78-7-14
Montcalm (Peter) (sink)	0-0-0
<b>No Flags:</b>	
VDT (sink)	71-14-31
Scharny (sink)	32-7-10
The Bike (sink)	32-19-25
Nagato	120-9-27
Mpls (sink)	22-0-5
St Louis (sink)	38-10-10
Tiger	19-0-2

TMGBC (sink) 50-13-41  
A crushing flag victory at 17790 to 10070.

We headed back to the hotel, cleaned up and found an all you can eat BBQ buffet. We were able to get a table for 14 with no waiting and the food was pretty good. The vets introduced the Best/Worst 5 to the new guys. Saturday night was a long night of patching in the room Peter and I were sharing. We had a lot of holes to take care of. We also had some repairs to the ships, nothing major but the dope fumes in the room were at a very high level, even with the door and window open.

Sunday morning was beautiful outside, sunny and warm. Perfect weather for the new sweatshirt John bought at Wal-Mart. The Fleets were changed around so the Au brothers could work together. We now had:



The St. Louis prepares for the post-battle limbo contest.

Flags: Washington, MO, SLC, St Louis, Glorie, Graf Spee, TMGBC.

No Flag: VDT, Scharny, The Bike, Nagato, Mpls, We Vee, Haruna.

This was the "Sink Bob Battle". The Aus chased me around the pond the entire first sortie. It was hard to stay away from their sidemounts. Every turn I made one of them was there. It did not help that after I tweaked I forgot to reload my guns, each one was half full at best. But maybe it did help because I called 5 faster and got off the water without being in really bad shape.

This gave the Aus a chance to put Peter in a sandwich across the length of the pond. Peter once again made a dive into the weeds. This time Dave came in after him. He lined up his bow sidemount and started to fire. Good thing for Peter there was only one bb left in that gun. Dave was very disappointed and came back out. Peter took the beating and also made it off the water.

Tom P did sink on the other side of the pond. He later found a big ram hole that he did not call or remember getting bumped.

The second sortie I made sure to check my guns for a full load of bbs. I would need them. As battle started I walked up to Chris and Dave and told them I heard Hovis' motors weren't working and Tom P had no power to his guns so they should sink them first then come after me. "Isn't that throwing your teammates under the bus?" Chris asked.

My information was not believed, they came after me right away. We spun and fired and moved around the pond. I didn't get rid of all my bbs before they put me down, but I got rid of most of them. Just wish I had remembered to fill my guns that first sortie.

The Au brothers did have just enough bbs left to sink the St Louis again. Kevin K. had bbs left too and the Au brothers chased him around the pond for 10+ minutes. Kevin

was laughing the whole time. They did get him into a sandwich but Kevin hit the brakes and the Aus shot each other. The Washington had taken a ton of damage, 6550 points.

Scores were:

<b>No Flags:</b> VDT	15-6-2
Scharny (sink)	57-5-3
The Bike	7-0-0
Nagato	62-3-9
Mpls	7-3-0
We Vee (sink)	42-7-1
Haruna	57-6-12.
<b>Flags:</b> MO	8-1-6
SLC	4-1-0
St Louis	76-8-19
Glorie	3-3-1
Graf Spee	30-5-4
TMGBC	62-9-18
Washington (sink)	40-30-84

A big No Flag Victory 6570 to 12055

For the afternoon battle we traded ships around again and James Foster made it out after sleeping in.

**Flags:** Washington, MO, VDT, SLC, St Louis, Glorie, Graf Spee,

TMGBC.

**No Flag:** Scharny, The Bike, Nagato, Mpls, We Vee, Haruna, Andrea Doria.

I wanted to go sink Foster and Tom P before the Aus got me again. I was hoping they would go after Peter or Kevin H. Things started off that way but then we ended up tangling. Peter and I tried to work as wingmen but those two were all over us. The Doria did go down later in the battle as did John's Sharny. Peter and I both got beat up pretty bad and after the sortie we were wondering who would sink first.

I got the Montcalm ready knowing I was going to sink so I could toss it out there and battle with it this weekend. As the second sortie started the Aus came after Peter and I. The Washington was doing ok taking damage, and then I turned a little too much and ran a little too far, this put too much water in the hull and she sank. I called man in the water right away and Peter was not



Peter Ellison returns to shore with his Mighty German Battlecruiser.



fast enough going on 5. He had to wait until I was out of the water to call it and try and run away. I made it up to the tables and had the Montcalm ready when Peter sank.

I got the cruiser on the water and found the We Vee sitting around so I dumped most of my sterns into her, so much for taking revenge on the Au brothers. I was messing around with Tom H, the St Louis had lost rudder control again. I was trying to prop wash the St. Louis under. He had a few bbs left and popped two of them into the side of the Montcalm, not an easy thing to do.

The sortie ended and we went out for a third sortie. Peter and John wanted to patch and do a 1 on 1 so they stayed out of the battle. This sortie had the Aus trying to sink Mark's VDT. He ducked and dodged them for a long time. He has one of the best deck seals I've ever seen. The stern of the ship was under water many times and it still remained afloat. I chased around with Tom P trying to get him to stop so the cruisers could get some shots into him. I misjudged the timing and hit him pretty hard on the deck rim. It popped part of my deck off, for the rest of the battle I had to turn carefully so water did not come in through the deck. Tom H ended up in the weeds getting shot up by the Aus again and sank at the end of the sortie. Scores were:

<b>Flag: MO</b>	23-1-1
Washington (sink)	58-15-47
VDT	33-8-36
SLC	0-0-0
St Louis (sink)	75-9-24
Glorie	20-0-0
Graf Spee	12-6-10
TMGBC (sink)	27-7-18
Montcalm (Bob)	2-0-1.
<b>No Flag Scharny (sink)</b>	26-1-10
The Bike	35-8-2
Nagato	60-5-6
Mpls	11-0-0
We Vee	59-6-28
Haruna	80-7-25
Andrea Doria (sink)	63-1-12

It was a No Flag victory 9990 to 13300

The Scharny on Scharny action consisted of Peter and John aimlessly wandering around the pond taking shots at each other. There was not a lot of action and not a lot of holes either.

Back at the hotel we patched the ships up and did a little work on Tom H's new Scharny. The next morning we woke up to rain and thunderstorms. The big red and orange blobs on the radar looked like they would last most of the morning. We might have been able to get a battle in-between showers but no one was that excited about battling in the rain and driving home wet. We got together for a group photo (short Kevin H and James), handed out best of class awards, said our good byes and headed home. Best of Class prizes for the event were some very nice T-shirts made by our host Kevin

Kaminski. He is a new member and a first time host. He did a great job finding the pond, getting permission from the city, making hotel arrangements and getting all the supplies we needed. Best of Class Awards were:

Class 6 Dave Au, Class 5 Tom Palmer, Class 4 Chris Au, Class 3 Kevin Kaminski, Class 2 Randy Stiponovich.

In case you are wondering the righteous Flag Fleet won the Tangler at Engler by a score of 45,835 to 44,345. A lot of really uneven battles made for a really close overall score.



The shoreline chaos of pre-battle preparations.

# Water Channeling

by David Ranier



I wanted to try a new method of water channel, and I observed a product that an ex old time MWC member is now using in his new boat construction, Mikey Deskin in Ohio.


Bob H suggested that I write up this article, after I posted on the RC combat website a series of construction articles I did on my new PE, showing me using this method for the water channel. People in Bob's area are now using this method, we also have people in region 3 using it with great success, after reading about it on the site.

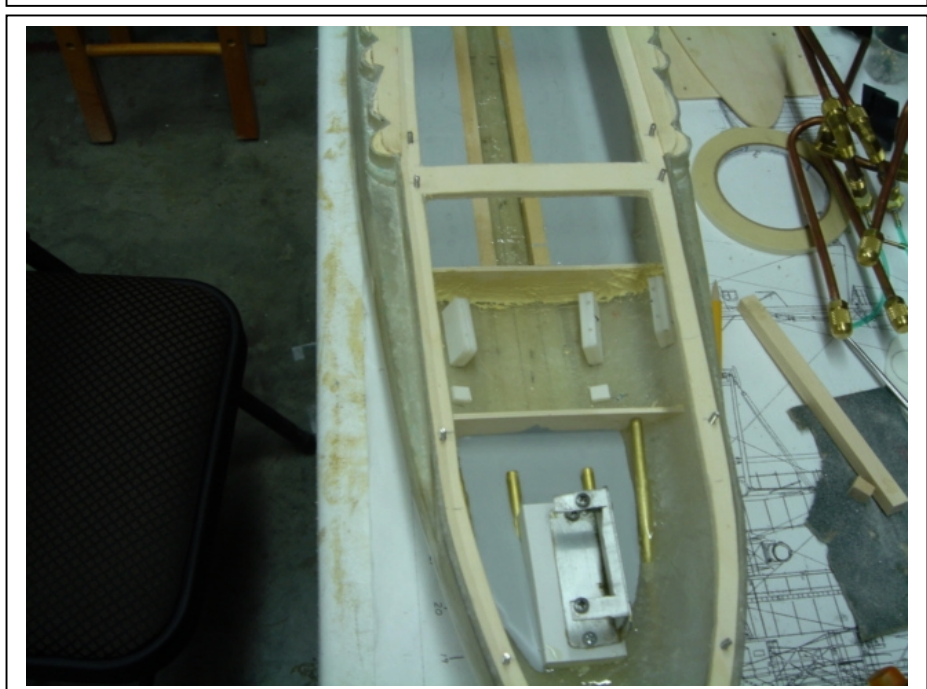
I use Polyurethane Self-Leveling Concrete Crack Sealant. It is made by P.L. Industries, and just works fantastic I think.

As you can see in the pictures, I installed a 3/8 deep water channel wall, added mounting blocks for the solenoids, and various other equipment. Then I sealed all of them with West Systems epoxy. It must be sealed to the deck, or the sealant will leak under the water channel walls.

I added bulkheads across the hull for the pump and drive motors. Then I just used a caulking gun to squeeze out the Concrete Crack Sealant. It will self-level in just 10 to 15 seconds then you can add additional material till it comes up to the level of the wall.

Wait 2 days, and you have a rubber water channel which channels the water, and at the same time adds weight to the bottom of the boat, making for a very stable model. Each tube weights 10 oz, I put just under 2 tubes in this boat.

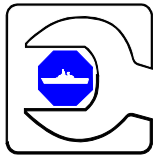
We now have a couple of cruisers in region 3 also using it, and they handle very well, with little side to side tipping. 





# Removable Pumps

(leave that hose behind)



by Brian Koehler

In building the extra ships for the kids I have tried to make as much of the ship easy-maintenance as possible (since I will have so many ships to maintain). Something I did in Christopher's *HMS Lion* that I wish I had done in ALL my ships (I love it so much that I plan to retro-fit my other ships sooner or later) is made the pump easily removable for cleaning/inspection without pulling off hoses or dangling on wires.

As you can (hopefully) see in the first photo, I simply glued down a piece of 1/4" plywood with a short piece of brass tubing inserted through it at the same height as the pump nozzle (the brass tubing used is one telescoping size larger than the pump nozzle itself). You should just be able to see at the left of the photo that the pump hose is attached on the outside of the brass tubing (and runs



The new plug and spray system.

Photos by Brian Koehler

up to the outlet as usual).

To install the pump (*see second photo*) I just set it down on top of my filter floss and slide it over until the pump nozzle slides snugly into the brass tubing. I leave a zip-tie in the boat set to the right size that slides around the motor and the top of the plywood mount that holds the pump

in place. I then plug in the pump motor (I use PowerPoles but you can use whatever quick disconnects you like best). Removing is simply the reverse: disconnect power wire, lift zip tie, and slide pump back. Everything else stays in the ship!





## PPB April Showers bring big puffy white flakes battle

by Bob Hoernemann



**4-13-08:** The weather beat us for our first planned April battle. It was too cold and frozen to battle so we got together at Ron's shop for a building day. Ron was working on the NATS trophies, they look very nice. He also had the Lion and St Louis getting tuned up. His new guns were installed in the Lion, also a new stinger motor and some minor electrical work. The St Louis is getting new shafts, the old ones were broken in a fall last year. Lars had the Tiger in the shop getting some hull work cleaned up on it. Mike was working on St Paul super structure. Brandon had his "New" I-boat along getting the shafts in place and working on water channeling. Ben stopped by and fixed a part on my car. He also told us about the ice boat he was sailing on this winter. Maybe he can design a way for us to really put skates on the ships. I worked on the Lion and St Louis with Ron. I was ready to battle. We missed seeing the members of the Axis fleet. But maybe that's why we got so much work done. TMGBC was a MGNS (Mighty German No Show). We had a second weekend in April planned as a possible first battle date, and the weather reports looked promising at the time of our first cancellation.



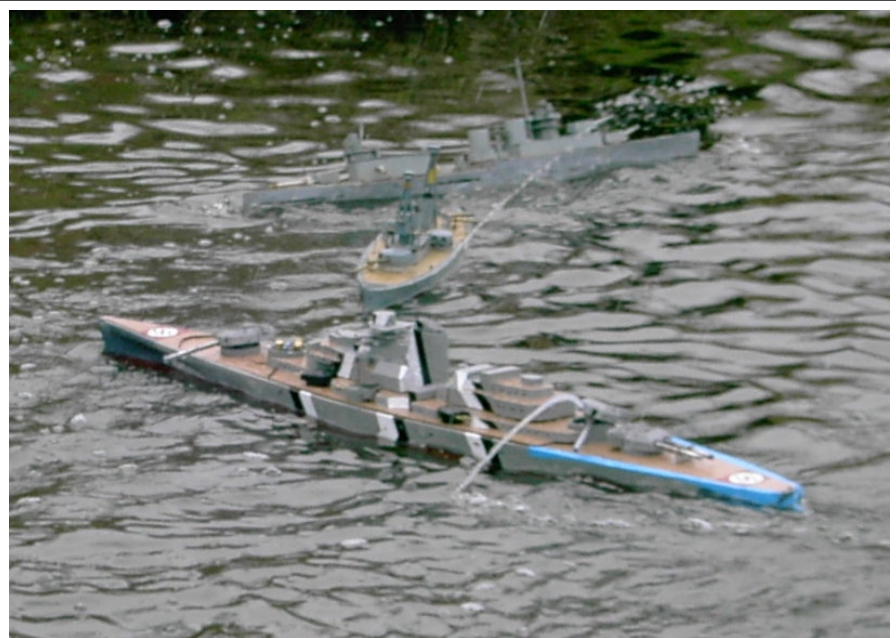
**4-27-08:** It was a close call with the weather today. A hardy group of battlers still got together for a snowy battle. It had been a building marathon at my ship yard this weekend. Brandon (I-boat) & Andy (Baltimore) were in the basement trying to get their ships ready for the battle on Sunday. Both of them got close but neither made it. Andy and

I went down to the pond for a quick sea trial Saturday night with the new Washington and the freshly sheeted Baltimore. Neither ship had ever been wet before. The Washington performed well. It was balanced, turned well and had some good start/stop power. It looked a little slow but we were too cold to find the test stakes and time it. The Baltimore was also well balanced and turned better than I thought it would. Andy drove around for a while and had a shaft lock up. This had been a problem the last couple of days and would be item #1 to fix Saturday night. Andy said he finally went to bed at 2 am, without interior armor. Brandon got the ship sheeted but did not get all of the insides finished.

Sunday morning I got down to the pond about 11 am and set up. I had the new Washington, FN Montcalm, USS St Louis and The Bike. Tyler, Steve and Jason Schafer were the first group down to the pond. Jason started building his Prince Eugen back when I started building The Bike (2000). He last battled it a few years ago, 2003 maybe. The first thing he did before the battle was patch the holes from

that battle 4+ years ago. Bill, one of my coworkers, stopped by to see what the battling was like and got to take The Bike for a spin. We also had a new prospect, Tim Dorn, come down to watch the battle.

I got all of my ships ready and took Bill to find the speed markers to test the Washington. She was slow and 26.5 sec. I took the drag disks off and got it up to 24.5 sec., so I'll have to get some bigger gears. I also marked the waterline and added some tape. I did not do a good job in the bow and had some "below" area above the water. I set Bill up with The Bike by giving him the grand tour of the ship, bbs go here, plug in the battery here. By this time Peter had made it down to the pond and was dressed up like a German Engineer. He had on a long black jacket with gold buttons and some gold arm decorations and a white hat. I think the hat was more Captain and Tennile than German Navy. He did get the best dressed award for the day. Andy and Dave also made it down as we were setting up. The Baltimore would not make it out but Andy ran the St Louis. It took a while but we got the ships ready to go out for the first battle of the year.



Steve Dickow's Bismarck tangles with the I-boat and the Bike.

Photos supplied by Bob Hoernemann

Just as we hit the water Lars made it down to the pond.

The fleets were split up to be Washington (Bob), The Bike (Bill), Mpls (Tyler) versus Bismarck (Steve), TMGBC (Peter), St Louis (Andy), Prince Eugen (Jason). The PE lost a gear right at the start of battle and was out before things got started. Tyler went after the St Louis. He thought there was no reason for him to use his stern guns on Peter's low freeboard. After playing with the St Louis he found a bigger target in the new Bismarck. I traded sidemounts, for a while with Peter. Then we both had our guns jam with a bb in the barrel. This happened several times during the

day. I don't think we had a bad batch of bbs. It must have been some burrs left over in the new barrels we made this winter. By the end of the day my guns were working fine. The bbs seemed to run out fast, or the guns jammed up halfway through the magazine. Steve had taken most of the Mpls and Washington's stern guns. I practiced my prop washing but may have bumped too hard a couple of times. The Bismarck sank at the end of the sortie. I had wader duty today and went to get the big ship. That thing sure weighs a lot when it's full of water. We found two nice ram holes in the starboard side of the ship, that might have been me.

Back to the bench to get ready for the next sortie. Everyone reloaded guns and CO2. There was no need to chill the bottles as the cold temps and fast firing guns had frozen some bottles in place. I could not get mine out of the ship until I dumped some water on it.

A few of us worked on guns, while Steve patched his damage. Jason borrowed one of my spare gears and was ready to fight. Lars had one of his I-boats ready, a handy back up while Tiger II is getting refitted. After a long delay getting things back together we found that the St Louis had lost rudder control and had a little water in the radio box. I thought I found all the cracks



The Bismarck and her captain try to run the Denmark Straits in the middle of a late April snow squall.



but now discovered that I had missed a couple. Andy was going to take it out without the rudder and try to dump his bbs and get off the water. I started putting ships in the water and was soon called to get the sunken St Louis. The servos were twitching and turning off the pump. As soon as I got it on shore another sank. The Bike had also gone down, with one of those new guy forgetting to turn the pump on.

Fleets were Washington and The Bike versus Bismarck, TMGBC, Mpls, I-boat and PE. Just as battle started the Bismarck went dead in the water. I think the PE did too as I don't remember shooting at Jason. I turned for a few stern shots at the Bismarck and then started after the TMGBC and I-boat. Steve was able to fix the problem, not sure what it was. Peter and I traded sidemounts for a while and I chased his triple sterns. He gave me a few good holes on both sides of the ship. While we were playing the Mpls did a good job of picking at my sides. He got some really good shots into me and I was in no position to try and get him back. He did get caught away from the open water and I ran him into the channel closely followed by Peter. The Mpls turned too close to shore and got caught in the weeds. I backed in for some stern shots and also got caught. We both went on 30 second moss while Peter was able to back in for some free target practice on the Washington. Either his guns were close to empty or not working as the damage was not very heavy. After I cleared the Mpls' props Tyler ran away while I cleared my own. Next time I'll have to remember to clean my props first. I went back to chasing Peter and the I-boat went down. Lars later found a non-working pump was the cause to this sink. TMGBC soon found its favorite place on the bottom of the pond. I pulled him out and got to play with Steve until all his bbs were gone.

After the sortie, Lars said his non-functional pump drove him



Lars battens down the hatches on the I-boat while Tyler winces in the face of the sudden winter gale's onslaught of giant puffy white flakes

crazy. The pump screen wasn't clogged. The motor was spinning, so he thought it likely that a set screw on the impellor came loose. Lars removed the pump and tested it in the lake. He got a normal gusher of water, which surprised him greatly. Finally he put his hex driver into the outlet and pushed out a large piece of clear silicon that had basically sealed the pump outlet. The lesson here is to always check your pump, even the outlet and hose.

After the battle Tyler told me I was shooting high, hitting his pretty superstructure. I ranged my sterns down a little for the next sortie. All of the boat fishing had got my hands and jacket wet; I was getting colder and could not feel my fingers. It's hard to find the push buttons on your radio when you can't feel them. I found myself pushing the wrong buttons a lot. Lars told me to get my ship out on the water and stop whining about the cold weather. We decided to go out for another sortie without patching. Peter was out with too much damage and some other ship problems. I could feel a cold blast of air and then it started to snow. Just a little at first, then big

fluffy flakes. We rushed to get the ships on the water so we could take photos of the battle in the snow. This might have been the first time I was disappointed it stopped snowing. We did get a couple of photos of the Bismarck in the snow.

The fleets should have been the same as the last sortie but this sortie turned into a free for all pretty quick. Lars had been having some radio issues. Jason and Lars both were having radio issues and thought they might be on the same channel. Jason should be on 81, but his transmitter crystal was not labeled. Jason pulled his ship off the water.

I held off shooting at The Bike, there's not that much skin left and we have a few more battles to go to. I took off after Lars with my starboard sidemount, the one I'm used to shooting with. Lars started to have intermittent control problems. The farther away from shore he got the worse it was. He tried to stay close to shore but then was distracted when he found a good target in The Bike. He lost control completely and the I-boat, stuck in reverse, pushed the Bike into the weeds on the far side of the channel. As he was trying

to run to the other side, the ship glitched back into forward and the ship drove itself under and sank in the channel.

Meanwhile I used some stern guns and the port sidemount, the one I need practice with, on the Bismarck. Tyler had already put a few more holes into him. A little prop washing and she went down again. I pulled it out of the water, along with the I-boat. Then I started chasing the Mpls around the pond. Tyler emptied his stern guns into my bow as I tried to cut him off and get him on my port side. He got behind me once and I was able get rid of my sterns. Tyler saw the next part of the battle like this.

I had a couple of really big ons and enough aboves close to the water line that with the slight starboard list was enough to do me in. When we were fighting for position, Bob ran me over a bit (not quite a ram) but it was enough to push my stern under for a few seconds and I think that let in enough water to be unrecoverable. With only 3 ships on the water, I

didn't have the luxury of sitting and pumping, so I think Bob kind of chased me under. To add insult to injury, and to show his general distaste for well constructed pretty looking superstructure, he blew off a couple pieces of ABS as I went down.

As the Mpls was going down the bow, like most cruisers, was sticking out of the water. Tyler managed to drive it to shore. It was this trip with the bow bobbing out of the water that was too tempting for me. I had bbs, was on the right side to use them and had to try. I was just a little off target.

We looked at the damage to the I-boat and found all 14 belows on the same side, that sidemount is still on target. Steve was surprised to see big holes in his interior armor. He used plastic carpet cover. It might have worked on a warm day when it was more flexible but in the cold it was too brittle and broken.

We packed up the gear and headed back to the cars. The walk to the car must have warmed us up a

little because we sat around and talked ships for half an hour before we all headed home. Lars stopped to call home as we all left the parking lot. He thought he was the last to leave, but then he saw a shivering Tim standing on top of some playground equipment, still waiting for his wife to pick him up. He told Tim to come sit in his warm car while they waited.

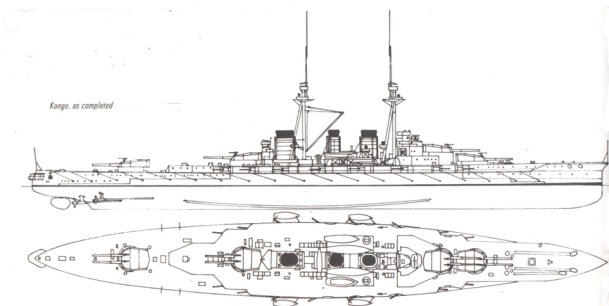
Scores were: Tyler Mpls 19-2-6 sink, Steve Bismarck 263-19-10 2 sinks, Lars I-boat 65-9-14 2 sinks, Andy St Louis 31-0-0 sink, Bill The Bike 28-1-3, Bob Washington 57-22-23, Peter TMGBC 13-8-7 sink, Jason PE 0-0-0.



PPB Weather! Hah!

## **TASK FORCE 144**

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*It is dangerous to meddle with admirals when they say they can't do things. They have always got the weather or fuel or something to argue about. – Sir Winston Churchill, December 1941.*