



Australian Battle Group

A Big Gun Fighting Warship R/C Club

Editorial

We have been trying to get a volunteer to do our quarterly Newsletter. Brett Farquharson, our esteemed AusBG Secretary, has been doing a sterling job but just has too much on his plate. CanBG Secretary David Howard is doing the articles in the Airborne Magazine which will be a tremendous boost to our membership as this reaches so many hobbyists. As this job is so much more important to the hobby, we hope he will keep doing it for a while. I am not sure if this Newsletter is relevant in these days of the Internet when we can contact the majority of the members in minutes. It is a lot of work for the few members not on the net.

I have done a couple of courses on this but doing it for real is a different matter. If there is a skilled operator out there, please give me a call on 02 62883718h. Richard Simpson has been flat-out with the AusBG homepage and also produced that fantastic CD for us and has enough to do.

Minors

While we need all the members we can get and the most enthusiastic are minors, this brings with it a whole new set of problems. Brett who has been involved with young people states it is a can of worms and we should be careful. Many parents are happy to use the hobby as a 'baby' minding service and relinquish all parental control by their absence. The duty of care is too much for us to undertake so we should only accept minors IF a parent is interested and involved in the hobby.

Bowning Battle

The Mid-June Nationals held on the Queens Birthday Weekend at Bowning, was disappointing. The weather was cold, raining and windy. While the battling was great, the conditions were so miserable that members called it off after a day and a half. The Bowning Pub did a splendid job looking after us as usual and the fires were roaring. I believe the Super V8 Cars in Canberra had problems, numbers were down due to the cold and there is some doubt that it will be held again especially at the June long weekend. We too, may have to reconsider our June Event.

A bit of news, Owen Foster of Newcastle who was at Bowning and has a new Scharnhorst Battlecruiser, is making 7/32" ID barrels. Normally we have been using 1/4" ID barrels for our 7/32" BB's. Velocity is down and fair bit of gas is wasted. This compares to my Strasbourg giving the Alabama a slap on the wrist and getting an upper-cut back. There could be a market in the US for this size, Owen.

Strasbourg did have some problems with its props. I had Vaseline in my prop shafts and the cold weather restricted movement (using up battery) and I had to remove it to get everything working. I did get water seeping in and at one stage I nearly lost the starboard shaft and prop but managed to get home to port with it held in by the rudder. I remember I laughed when I heard of the Americans at Mid-westBG preparing for their Winter Arctic Convoys, not anymore!

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New Ships

Brett's Mogami had a good trial at Bowning and the team got together to iron out his electrical problems. Brian Evan's had his new Yamato sailing as a transport and it was very impressive. The grace and stability of this ship has convinced many that this is an ideal gun platform. Brian now has a decision to make!

As previously mentioned, Owen's Scharnhorst looked a picture and performed well. A new Jervis Bay took the water and a new hospital ship also ventured out carefully. Brett is working on a new fast ship but little else is known. Colin Jones's uncompleted Yamato (and cannons) has gone north to Sydney and so has the Burdens' Heavy Cruiser Houston, one of the original ships in the AusBG.

Model Shows

The Canberra Malkara Model Show is on the 3rd and 4th August. Unfortunately, Brett will be away for his son's engagement Party and David Howard will be at the Cook Islands playing tourist so we have a serious problem as these 2 guys are a major part of our Group. This leaves Brian Evans and myself to do the lot. So any help from others, members or not, is welcome.

The Newcastle Model Show is on later that month and Brett and I may be able to go up to help. Shows are an ideal way to advertise your hobby and newer Squadrons are urged to consider this method to increase membership.

The Eden Model Show is now going to be the Tuross Model Show and on in November. Again, Brett and I with possibly Brian and David, will go down.

Remember, we have all the material you would need for a Show. We also have a TV and VCR, a Laptop for the CD slide-show and Brett's Safe Firing Range. This latter is a real crowd-pleaser and people will be queuing up to fire the cannon all day.



Left - USS Alabama taking on the Iowa class Battleship Mike Dundee of Noel Brain. Noel has built more warships in Victoria than anyone else and has 4, I think at last count.

Noel went well at the last Bowning battle and this ship was quite reliable.

Membership Fees

Most interested people hold off joining until they have a working ship. I can understand that, a dollar is a dollar and it does take a few months to complete a ship. However we also have several members who are Contact Officers and Officials and who do have ships, who are NOT financial. This money is necessary for the insurance, the www. site we use and the incidentals all clubs have. Just a friendly reminder to do the right thing. In ALL clubs there are people who do spend far more than they have on club business and don't expect nor get re-payment. Richard Simpson is a good example, think how much we could have to pay to get what he produces! Brett is another, traveling at his own expense and also Glendon who accommodates and feeds us when we go up.

Right - the French Battlecruiser Strasbourg is in trouble. USS Alabama has peppered her with shot and she is struggling to get back to port after surviving a 5 minute call. She nearly got there but sank when her Skipper got shot in the shin by Alabama and dropped her stern under.



Honorary Memberships

The AusBG has decided to give some official form of recognition to people who have helped us start the hobby in Australia. Most of you have heard that we own a debt of thanks to two Americans, Randy Kehr of the South-coast Battle Group in California and Phil Sensibaugh of Midwest Battle Group in Indiana for all their help. These guys have sent us Rules, Information, Hints and Equipment such as Clippard Fittings, Neubauer 'Indiana' type Cannons, CO2 tanks and Regulators. This is just a nice gesture and Brett has had a couple of Certificates made up which he will send to them.

The help we received has led to the formation of a National Body, the AusBG, in November 1997, which controls all the Exemptions/Waivers and most importantly, the blanket Insurance for all our Groups/Squadrons. It pushed us to have one set of Rules to suit Aussie conditions and means that any member in any part of Australia, can participate in any AusBG-sanctioned Battle and his ship and cannon will comply.

The AusBG structure has reached the stage that a Naval Staff of one member of each Group/Squadron plus the elected Office Bearers will now run the organisation and the group of original volunteers will fade from that area of responsibility.

Safety

The June battle at Bowning saw 2 accidents. First, Brett's station wagon's rear side window went 'boom' and later a bus window copped it. The AusBG voted to pay for the repairs to the Car and the Bus claimed on their insurance, the reason being no one would believe the true story. However, we now have to add another line to our Waiver exempting the AusBG and Landowner of responsibility. All Members and Spectators will be warned that their vehicles could get damaged and they should take proper action. The fact was the we did have a 5ft (1.5m) shade-cloth barrier up and the BB's still got over. It is assumed that the BB's must have bounced off the decks of ships under fire and then over the barrier. So accidents will still happen and it re-enforces the use of Safety Glasses. The Americans did warn us of this danger when they saw our videos.



Anthony Burden's USS South Dakota, was the first Allied Battleship of the CanBG, part of the AusBG. The South Dakota has just sunk the merchantman USS Scorpion on a large dam under very windy conditions, near Yass, NSW.

Ships were few in the early days and we often had to have battles with whatever ships were available. Strict Axis/Allied Battles came only when numbers increased or at National Meetings.



Left - DKM Deutschland, a Pocket Battleship looks great before combat at Bowning. First ship in the AusBG. Bill K to Steve B to Scott D'arcy.

Right - How is this for a model of the DKM Graf Spee? Imagine launching and retrieving this ship. Note the skipper aboard.



Australian Battle
Group

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SHIP OF THE MONTH



This is the French Battleship FNS Richelieu, a 32 knot ship armed with 8 x 15" guns in two Quads. This model fires 60 salvos of 8 x 1/4" BB's. Her skipper, David Howard of the CanBG is an outstanding gunner, often engaging at long distances. Her size makes for a big turning circle but she can take huge punishment without sinking. She has only been sunk once since Dave took over from her previous skipper, Bill Kirwan.

The ship took heavy damage from earlier battles and is undergoing extensive repairs and possible replanking.

Comments

Again, I ask for someone to volunteer to do this Newsletter. I am on standby to help David Howard to do the Airborne Warship Combat Articles if he goes away. That Magazine covers a wider range of modellers and has a better chance of increasing our membership. I am doing this on Publisher 98.

The winter season has been quite severe and restrictive to the hobby. We need ships on the water and battling. Cannons are available, hulls can be ordered and now speed controllers and pumps are being produced locally.

For those Groups/squadrons not battling, concentrate on getting Filler Stations, armed ships and a couple of transports. You will be surprised once the first shot is fired at your progress! Try to get to a Nationals to widen your range of opponents and experience. There is only so much talking and organising members will take before losing interest. Once involved in Battle, you have them hooked!

Groups/squadrons should try to provide material to the editor if interest is to be maintained in this Newsletter.

