



Australian Battle Group Inc.

A Big Gun Fighting Warship R/C Club

6th Nationals/AGM – Travelling tips

As we prepared to travel to Armidale for the Nationals and the cars started to fill up, we realised that we needed to plan a bit better. Most Skippers like to drive up with someone as it shares the costs and breaks the monotony of the long journey. If you have a trailer then you are pretty well off for space, otherwise you could have a headache. The vital individual things are ships, stands, radios, hats and chairs. Items you can share are sun shelters, tool boxes, repair kits, ice boxes, sun-screen, water, even cameras.

We should have gone to a club, and over a few beers, planned the trip in comfortable surroundings. The stress, in deciding what to leave behind and what was important, will only decline once you commence your journey.



Left: Severe damage to the Battleship Richelieu. Skipper David Howard will have this repaired in no time.

Right: Richard Vanden Brink and Markus Ward (VicBS) prepare their ships for battle. It was a pleasure to have such cheerful skippers there.



AusBG certified Cannons

The welcome news for us is that AusBG certified cannons are now available from Richard Single in Armidale, NSW. A problem is that our barrel makers cannot get hold of 1/4" ID pipe and this means that shot will not be as accurate, barrels will be worn and more gas is used. Should a sleeve be inserted in the barrel to reduce this gap, then there is a problem of the edge reducing the power of the bb's. Richard Simpson is testing if an addition of a sleeve to reduce the ID will help.

If anyone can help with this problem, please contact Richard Single, Owen Foster, or Gadget Gage. We need the right size pipe with the correct ID. The cost of these cannons is Richard Single's contribution to the hobby. He will not be retiring early at the low price he charges for them. He has put these cannons within the reach of most interested people and transport skippers. Our sincere thanks to you for this effort.



Left: Our host, Armidale's Michael Raue preparing the site for the coming battles. The Raue and Single families did themselves proud in looking after us.

Right: IBSS skippers work on their ships. Bruce Curran under the hat and that is Stu Calvert's SoDak USS Massachusetts in front on the ground.



6th Nats Photos



Left: 'Come here you mongrel!' Michael Raue's HMS Lion chases an Axis transport. After the first battles, the Axis Fleet was off the water for some time with problems.

Right: Brian Evans (CanBG) IJN Yamato takes on the USS Alabama of Richard Simpson (SydBS).



Left: The Axis Fleet waiting for the Allies. This is proof that we were there, contrary to the Allies' filthy lies.

Right: 'You missed one there' says Flora to husband John Ritch (CanBG). His mighty little transport SS Cairnross did the most runs during the battles.



Left: Battle damage to SydBS David Smith's transport. That is one hellva hole, mate.

Right: Markus Ward (Vic BS) pursues an Axis transport. His Battleship X is a SoDak class and one of the most popular in the hobby.



Snippets

It appears that our Victorian friends had a very long and slow trip up to Armidale. Seems they were overloaded with everything and everyone crammed into one van but it was the 100,000 ball bearings they were carrying for sale to members at the Nats which really stuffed them on the hills. The old van um and ah'd as it crawled up the grades. The trip home was a lot smoother without extra weight of the bearings.

I have been informed that the transport Jasmine Elise of the Newcastle BS, did ram and sink the Axis submarine U-112 of Brian Evans and, according to the Rules of War, stopped to rescue survivors and has logged the event with the Admiralty as required by Law. Rumours of leaking torpedoe tubes are a smoke screen put out by the Axis Powers who are having trouble recruiting crew for the U-Boat Service against the valiant Allied Forces.

It appears that Marcus Champ (CanBG) has a point. In his story in this issue, he feels that to throw a new skipper into combat is quite frightening. Perhaps there should be either a 'Period of Grace', either the newbie is not fired upon in the first battle but can fire on others, or the first battle can be only for beginners. Something to think about. I remember when Gordon Cranfield of WA, first ventured forth and I sunk him immediately, while I was pleased as punch, he was very silent. It was the wrong thing to do, I now realise. We could have lost him to the hobby. Some of us did have an unwritten rule that first-time skippers were allowed to survive their first battle but there is nothing commonly accepted in this. Perhaps they could fly a Green ribbon for that battle indicating their beginner status.

AusBG – Personalities.



Bill Beamish of the Mudgee Pond Pirates is always cheerful and loves a good joke. He is endeavoring to get the hobby up and running in Mudgee and feels when his Nelson Class battleship hits the water (and under it), the guys he has in mind, will cave in and build. Bill has all the requirements for the hobby, he is very sociable, loves a beer and can talk! (God, sounds like me!) A great asset to our hobby.



David Smith is with Sydney BS and runs a transport USS Mission. Very brave as he put it into battle and took a pounding from those armed buggers. He has been with the hobby for a couple of years now and his father Russ takes him to all the battles. We are hoping that Russ will weaken and join the hobby and build. He might as well as he is on the spot with David.



Arnold Mueller and his wife Sue are new members of the CanBG. Arnold has bought Glendon Pryor's transport USS Montarossa and completely rebuilt it. He has also bought Steven Cowen's beautiful HMS Revenge without the cannons and has received his BDE's from the USA. We are hoping all will be ready for the Queens Birthday Nationals in June. Sue will have her SP2 German Destroyer armed with torpedoes completed by Brian Evans and should be afloat by the next battle in April.

Running National Battles for the AusBG

It has always been the intention of the AusBG to ask its Groups and Squadrons if they would like to host a Nationals in their State. (We hold two Nationals a year, the big one in the January long weekend and the second in June, Queens Birthday weekend). This is so that a) Groups get the experience to organise and run a National Battle over a 3 day weekend and b) rotate the Nationals so that some people will be rested from the travelling and its associated costs. In the early stages, because the Groups were few and very small in size, Bowling was a real boost for us. Now as the Groups/Squadrons grow in numbers and better water becomes available, we should be able to spread the Nationals interstate. We have now had 2 Nationals at Armidale, NSW. Any Group already battling can apply at the AGM but must comply with certain conditions. Basically they should have accommodation and repair facilities close to the site as well the members to help run such an event.

Canberra is well placed on the Hume Highway to be accessible to both Sydney, Newcastle and Melbourne Squadrons and also the Adelaide members and perhaps the Brisbane guys. CanBG has offered to be a 'default' site for the Nationals. Rather than miss out on a National Battle because no Group/Squadron can hold it, we will always try to hold one here. Our own site at Tuggeranong Ck Bend is too small for such a meeting but the Majura Pistol Club site is perfect. This has been confirmed by visiting skippers, as it has a canteen, shelter, toilets and showers. Somehow the cold winter does not seem as bad with these facilities. Skippers can bring vans or tents, there is some power. We are just here as a back-up.

Brett has forwarded the requirements to host an AusBG Nationals:

- 1) Must have the use of a dam or water which is easily accessible.
- 2) Must have a recovery boat available and a CO2 Filling Station.
- 3) Nearby accommodation.
- 4) Nearby dockyard facilities.
- 5) Meeting Venue for the AGM or Special Meeting.
- 6) Have at least 2 experienced skippers who have attended at least 2 AusBG National Battles
- 7) Dam water should have catering and toilet facilities if possible.

The items are self-explanatory. If you cannot meet some items but can suggest alternatives, it will be considered by the Executive and Naval Staff.

My First Nationals - by Marcus Champ (CanBG)

Five months of construction, several thousand dollars, half my garage, a large chunk of my partners' understanding and the ridicule of my friends has come to this point. The ten hour drive, the heat, the cramped car, the highway food, and the anticipation was over...I had arrived at the Nationals. My first combat and initiation into the madness that is the BIG GUN Warship Combat hobby had come.

The night before.

I was here at the Nationals...in Armidale...enjoying some wonderful hospitality by a very generous family...and surrounded by experienced captains out to sink me...oh joy!!! Plenty of advice flowed around me...as I tried to remain calm and not think about my investment going to the "bottom of the harbor"...literally....

Day One.

Tents were erected, chairs unfolded, boxes opened and tools lay scattered across the dew encrusted grass as I carried my new creation to a small table. My cannon had barely fired a dozen times and never in anger, my blast shields had only been forced into position late the night before, and as a completed unit it had been sailed for about 40 minutes. Yet here I was...the lone pigeon...about to place myself amongst a swarm of circling hungry cats!!!

The final call for the beginning of combat thundered across the field from our hosts. As I carried my pride and joy down to the water two things entered my mind:

1. These things are bloody heavy fully loaded...
2. How does one ritually sacrifice a credit card anyway?

I pushed it into the staging area...jostling with other men-o-war and merchants...and made my way around the 'bay' and onto the opposite dam wall. Then accelerated the ship through the buoys and into the open 'sea'...and into destiny.

The sound of metal tearing through water and balsa quickly tore through the morning air as ships weaved and danced like some surface feeding frenzy. Keeping track of what was happening across the water was basically impossible so just tried to concentrate only on what was going on around me. The cacophony of battle moved from one side of the dam to other...and subsided as my allied ship was left to sail amongst all the other allied ships that at that stage owned the waves. As I caught my breath I had a chance to actually think about what I was doing and could not help but wonder...What the hell I was doing here?

As the battle ebbed and flowed I discovered a number of things:

- I could not hit merchants...warships or a barn door it seemed...although my shot looked great as it skipped out across the water...
- There were some design faults that were making my life much more difficult...hadn't someone mentioned thorough testing BEFORE a major battle?
- Oh, look at the power level on my transmitter...note to self recharge fully the night before...
- Better and more prayers to god...any god were obviously needed...
- Mercy was not a word that anyone knew...let alone could spell.
- Ammunition evaporates much like a puddle in the Australian sun.
- Weed finds its way into the props quicker than flies on a cow pat.

I brought her in, patched holes, disembarked the wounded and noted the need to completely replace the gun crew of 'Anti-Air 3'. I actually envied the merchant captains...all they had to do was run flat out and turn....until I also noted that they were going down with monotonous regularity. Convoy escort was something both sides were going to have to work on.

Over the two days Davey Jones Locker was to remain a mystery to me...but plenty of changes were going to have to be made...and lots more practice was obviously needed. In many ways I thought I could only get better from here and was to some extent disappointed at how I went over the two days. But I also went out there...survived and most of the crew came home to talk about it. I learned a lot about the hobby...the people...and the level of competitiveness on the water did surprise me.

I feel that something more could be done for new people...as I felt very much out of my depth and more like cannon fodder most of the time rather than a combatant. Maybe there could be a short 'newbie' skirmish as part of schedule if there are the numbers. Overall I haven't been put off just yet and hope to be there again.

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SHIP OF THE MONTH



Markus Ward is a member of the VicBS and comes to as many battles as possible. His ship is a South Dakota class, Battleship X. He is working hard to secure a site in Victoria where we will be able to hold future Nationals.

The South Dakota class resulted in 4 ships, USS Alabama, USS Indiana, USS Massachusetts and the USS South Dakota. With a speed of 28 knots and 9 x 16' guns, this ship can fire about 200 1/4" bbs from each of its three triple turrets. Its twin rudders allow it to turn quickly, a great asset in battle. It is short and wide and is recommended to all skippers as a top choice. It is easy to transport and this is a huge plus in the hobby.

Last Salvo – Make Safe!



Above: HMAS Arunta being prepared for its maiden voyage. It is armed with 2 deck torpedoes on each side and its speed of 36.4 knots will keep it out of trouble.



Above: HMAS Arunta skippered by John Whitehead, is picture perfect. A well balanced ship with little or no heel, it will be interesting to see it turning at full speed.



Above: USS Montarossa, rebuilt by its skipper Arnold Mueller who is also rebuilding the Battleship HMS Revenge. Arnold's BDE cannons from the USA have arrived.

Brett Farquharson will be having a busy 2 months. His daughter is to be married in the middle of March, so it is a bad time to borrow a dollar from him. Then he goes to Guadalcanal, in the Solomon Islands, with the Venturer Scouts on a building project for 2 weeks in June-July.



Trish and I will be LA for a month visiting family on the 16th March. Randy Kehr of the South west Battle Group in California, has offered to get me to a battle there in March and I shall certainly accept. I must wear my Tee shirt to stir the possum. I will be pushing to get someone to come out to Oz to battle. Must appeal to their National Pride, shouldn't be hard to do.