



January—February 2005

Volume 4 Issue 1

Australian Battle Group Inc.

A Big Gun Fighting Warship R/C Club

National Battle—Canberra January 2005

Marcus,

The 7th Nats was held at the SSAA range at Majura in Canberra on the Australia Day weekend. Although this was not a three day weekend we did have a very good turn out with skippers from Armidale, Newcastle, Sydney, Adelaide, Melbourne and Canberra.

A total of 30 warships and 20 transports took part in the 2 day battle. We did not count holes only sinks and everyone enjoyed the event.

The AGM and spit roast was a great success. with 45 members staying for the meeting and food. This was held in the Big Green Shed after permission was received from the SSAA who have been very co-operative to our hobby. There was a gig shoot on at the same time so it area was packed with cars and members. We had many spectators who came to watch the battles and the appointment of 2 referees was a good idea. One conducted the battles and the other controlled the visitors making sure that safety glasses were used.

A very good meeting with a total of 18 sinkings. A relaxed atmosphere as there were so many ships there was little pressure to repair your ship quickly and return to battle. There were several ships who ran into the minefields set by Brett Farquahson and Steve Cowen and there was much discussion on the ethics of these unseen obstacles. members went home well satisfied with the 7th Nationals.



I would like to Thank Jason Pilgrim from the VBS for these pictures from the January Battle

More Pictures from January 2005 in Canberra



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January 2005 — Annual General Meeting and Secretary Report

Hi all,

The first Secretaries newsletter for 2005, which has a summary of the AGM material.

The AGM minutes, treasurer's report, the frequency discussion paper and the up to date ship owners register are all on the members page of the AusBG web site . The names in Bold black in the Ship Owners register are the people who have told me what ships and frequencies they have and are using. If you name isn't in bold letters, please let me know what you have. If you sell or buy any ships during the year, could you please let me know so I can keep the AusBG records up to date.

I will also be sending to the executive of each fleet an up to date record of the fleet's ship owner's records. This will assist with keeping your fleets frequency register etc. The frequency register issue was discussed and the discussion paper will be on the June meeting agenda for action. A copy of the discussion paper can be found on the web page

Our new office bearers for this year are CO Michael Raue, XO Mark Strong, TO Glendon Pryor and Secretary, Brett Farquharson, Treasurer Brian Evans and Publicity and Recruitment Officer Bill Kirwan.

After 7 years our long standing TO Tony Collins has stepped down. Tony is one of the foundation members and has done a great job during his period as the AusBG TO.

The updated BOR's were accepted and replace the old ones. The main difference is that the new BOR's are a condensed version of the old ones, instead of 40 odd pages there are now only 20 or so pages and they are much easier to read. I must thank the people who were involved with the BOR review.

The Sydney Fleet is preparing a proposal to host the June battle. When the proposal is received (before March) the executive will make a decision and notify everyone. The only proposal for the January 2006 AGM battle is a tentative one from the VBS, and depends on them having suitable water and getting their proposal form in so that a decision can be made at the June meeting. There are 2 default proposals held Armidale and Canberra so if the Sydney or VBS proposals fall through for any reason there are back up sites available. Don't be put off, if any fleet wishing to host the January 2006 AGM battle or any other National battle, please submit a hosting proposal form to the AusBG secretary. A copy of the proposal form can be requested from the secretary.

This year Lesley and I will be doing a bit of travelling (both in Australia and overseas), so there will not be the usual secretary's newsletter every 2 months. Talking of newsletters don't forget to send all articles and photos to Marcus Champ the new editor for the AusBG newsletter. If we don't get articles and photos we don't get a newsletter. Marcus can be contacted on marcuschamp@yahoo.com.au or 07 32775562. The latest newsletters should now be on the members web page.

The AGM battles were a success; with over 40 ships at the battle (with varying levels of reliability) the only things really missing were submarines and aircraft carriers. There was for the first time 2 mine layers, who both successfully laid mines over the weekend. There are a few more mine layers being built, so future battles could be interesting. It was good to see the destroyers both armed and unarmed whizzing about the dam. Scott Carruther's very small (360mm long) John Oxley was outstanding and very difficult to hit.

Now there are operational mine layers the arms race is now on with mine sweepers already on the slip ways being built. Where will it all end?

We now have 34 financial members for 2005. If you haven't paid your subs please do so ASAP. All cheques or money orders should be made payable to AusBG and forwarded to me at PO Box 2024 Bowring. One of the key recommendations of the frequency discussion paper is that if your not financial by March each year you will loose being the primary holder of any frequencies you have allocated to you and that frequency may be issued to another person who will become the primary holder.

The raffle was won by Andrew Jago from the Newcastle region. He bought the ticket at the Newcastle Our Town Toy Show last year. There will be a raffle again this year to be drawn at the 2006 AGM. The prize has not been determined as yet. If anyone has a ship or something to raffle please let me know. Last years raffle raised \$474.00, I managed to sell \$256.00 worth of tickets at the AGM battle.

Regards
Brett

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A Big Gun Fighting Warship R/C Club

Letter from Brethren in the MidWest Battle Group

This message is from Phil Sensibaugh of the Midwest Battle Group.:

I rarely weigh in on your mail list because you all seem to be doing fine on your own, and because cultural differences make a difference in the makeup of a club, and I know too little about the culture of your club. However, I feel compelled to make a comment on rules. My advise would be to keep the rules simple and not try to regulate every aspect of the hobby.

At one time the South Coast Battle Group was the dominate club. J.C. White was the focal point of the SCBG, and he helped me get the Midwest Battle Group started longer ago than I care to remember. But when J.C. tired of the hobby for reasons I cannot express (but rules changes were a big part of it), the SCBG declined from 30+ members to a much smaller group.

The Midwest Battle Group then grew into the dominate club, and the MBG has since run the gammit of an RC Combat club. As founder of the MBG, at one time I hosted a battle that put 50 ships on the water, with 35 on the water at one time. Since these days the MBG has gone from the biggest club with 50 members and over 60 ships, to the present state of the club with roughly 8 members. So how did the MBG and SCBG decline so much, and so rapidly? I believe the reason was threefold, 1) rules, 2) personalities and 3) communication.

The first reason was rules, in particular, too many rules, which soon lead to too little fun. We fell into the trap of trying to make rules to lay the unfounded fears to some members. As the club grew some members became fearful of certain ships. In your club it seems the Sodak is a powerful ship. In our club it was fear of the big battleships. At first we banned the hypothetical Alsace, with it's 12 x 1/4 inch barrels to keep the powerhouse off the pond, so I scrapped the Alsace and built an Iowa. The following season my Iowa I once took on 5 Axis capital ships, (two Richlieu's, two Bismark's and a Sharnhorst), and shot them to pieces. Next season the Axis were going to face 3 Iowa's, and this was the straw that broke the proverbial camels back. However, as time passed we found the it wasn't the ship, but rather the skipper than makes the difference. The three Iowa's didn't make any difference since the skippers running the new Iowa's failed to be effective with them. Putting a percentage on it, I'd say the effectiveness of a ship is 30% the ship and 70% the skipper running the ship.

The second reason why our club declined was personalities of skippers. As the number of skippers grew there were inevitability personality differences between some of the skippers. For several years I served as a mediator of sorts, keeping the personality clashes in check. However, I soon grew tired of the constant baby sitting and bickering, spending too much time smoothing ruffled egos, and I took a leave for a few years. Last year I returned to the hobby to find that over three or four years MBG membership had dropped from 50 skippers to 15. This year membership is down to 8. With no central and open minded person to serve as a buffer, soon our rules were turned upside down, trying to regulate every aspect of the hobby. People who never run a ship in combat proposed radical rules changes and riled up participating skippers. Differences in opinion over rules, added to the personality differences, soon took its toll and membership declined. In short, we forgot that a hobby has to be fun and simple, or no one will play.

The third reason is communication. For eight years I published our newsletter, the Combat Information Center. At the peak, I had 75 monthly subscriptions to the CIC. The CIC served as a means to discuss proposed rule changes, and to air gripes and complaints that come up during combat, who rammed who, which ship is pumping to much, etc. Many potential problems were resolved by airing both sides of an issue and making the issue seem less troublesome than it seemed during the heat of battle. However, when I quit publishing the newsletter it soon became history when no one else wanted to take on the effort of publication, and without this source of communications personal differences became troublesome, the hobby became more work than fun, and people began to drop out.

In closing I must say that currently the AUSBG is probably the largest RC Combat club in existence. Please care for it. Remember, above all else, that a hobby must be fun and fair or people will not participate for long. It has been my experience that if you burden a hobby with too many rules it soon become no fun. Emphasize that no ship may have an unfair advantage, and let debate decide what is unfair, rather than trying to make rules to cover every possible aspect of the hobby. If a person does not run a ship in combat, he or she should not participate in the rules debate, for they have no experience on which to base opinions. Be fair, be firm, have fun.

This is my unsolicited 2 cents worth, which is based on the bloody experience of the rise and fall of the MBG.

May the sound of air cannon and busting bulsa long echo over all the ponds down under.

Phil Sensibaugh

Some more Debate

Hi all,

As the founder of the Bowning Ship Yards I have a bit of a problem which I feel everyone should be aware of.

There were only a certain number of classes of ship built, with in these classes there were only a certain number of ships of that class built. This is a fact, just consult any Naval reference book you like.

My problem is that at present there are 6 WW2 South Dakotas armed and on the water and there are at least another 10 being built and I'm still receiving orders for them. How many South Dakotas are too many, considering there were only 4 ever built?

Regards

Brett

One response from Randy in the USA:

Hi Brett,

Phil did a great job of covering the narrow particulars, and the wide effects, of the perceptions of ships' battle effectiveness, and rules designed to "level the field".

Myself, I "like to see" variety on the pond. But, since each of us are individuals, we all do what we believe will fulfill our desire for enjoyment. For some, it's building a sentimental favorite, for others it is building a "killer ship". For the rest, it is building something in between. The issue with SoDak numbers isn't new to the hobby. Even the small gunners have this problem from time to time. It's just that a lot of guys got the same bug at the same time. No harm there.

If there is a feeling among certain members that this tide must change, it might be addressed in this fashion: Those who are not already bit by the SoDak bug might "encourage" other members to build something different. Phil is absolutely right in saying that the skipper makes the ship. He is responsible for the cheering, or jeering. There ARE other ships that can do well, and I believe that the answer is to promote those ships' good points. Encourage individualism. A number of people will opt for the ship-of-the-day simply because it seems to be such a dominating force. They want to be just as effective. After all, if the rest of the world is doing it..... But if options are realistically explained, they might go for that sleek cruiser or old BB.

Rule changes to limit this sort of thing will eventually have to be answered with counter-rules and counter-R&D. You really don't want that. The AusBG is the cleanest running group in Big Gun because of its perspective. Don't lose it. The rules were tweaked back in the beginning so that the game would attract members, and that worked well. The same care that went into the initial organization will win the day if applied to the answer to this issue. Encouragement, boys... encouragement!!!

If in the end, all you see are SoDaks, well.... it creates a simpler install base for equipment! Seriously, though, these things come and go in cycles. Have fun, blow the living tar out of each other, and share stories around the BBQ with friends.

Randy Kehr

p.s., There might be a naming convention issue with 10 or more of these things prowling around. Perhaps a uniform naming scheme could be agreed upon, so that the successful ships can "make a name for themselves" that would raise eyebrows in remembrance for their exploits, instead of raising questions about which Alabama that really was.

Note from the Editor:

There has been some lively debate on a number of topics over the last 6 months and there will be more covered in newsletters coming up. There is plenty to be considered in what has been said. I personally believe, anything that retains the vibrancy of the hobby and allows for the creativity of everyone should be encouraged. Ed.

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Captain Bill Black's Battle Advice

Sinking ships is not just a hobby...it is a way of life. In any combat it is important to be "in-the-zone"...concentrate on what you are doing. Be the boat...be the ball...and put your enemy to the bottom.

From the Captain.

Dear Captain Black

What is the secret to sinking my enemy?

Anon

Dear Anon

Hitting.

Actually hitting your enemy and putting those holes below the waterline is one of the most difficult tasks you will have to master. Last Issue I spoke of the need to pick your targets...well that was not just a load of hog-wash to get me paid more. Listen up...it begins with psychological preparation, and repeat...I believe I can crush my enemy...I believe I can send him to the bottom.

One good strategy is to aim the boat not the cannon. Before you fire back some stupid response...think about it. At first there is much to concentrate on...moving, turning, avoiding obstacles...not getting grounded, or weeded, etc. To help you get things coordinated make your life simpler in the beginning...put your cannon where you want them...then move the boat to aim....and of course practice, practice and practice.

Captain B.B.

Some more pictures from Canberra 2005



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- 📖 **Research and development**
- 📖 **Anzac Battle report**

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