

# Nats 2005 Ionia, Michigan

## August 13, 2005

Model Warship Combat Inc.'s National event 2005 was to be a special Nats.

For the first time since 1999, all the attending Captains would be on the water “**at the same time**”. All participants were full of anticipation, expecting to see huge “fur balls” on the water. With Nat’s in Michigan, cooler weather and hotter battling were the “standing” orders all week long.

Many Captains were doing a lot of pre-planning. A caravan of fun was coming up from the Texas contingent. In **Fluegel’s** words, “half the fun of Nats is the drive to it”. Jumping from car to car, he planned to enjoy the company of several Captains on the trip.



Grand Admiral Fluegel looking mighty “snappy”!

**Late Thursday night, Chris Pearce, Steve Reichenbach, Doug Hunt, and Brian Lamb** arrived at my house in NW Arkansas. (**Chris Pearce** had called me the night before and told me that he might need to stay up and work in my garage on his boat. I guess I am not the only one that is short of time lately). **Chris** decided that he needed sleep worse than his ship needed work. After some short conversation, it was off to bed.



Brian Lamb's Bismarck. This ship was "scratch built" by Tim Beckett and Brian finished it out. Sitting here, it had not yet seen combat. Never a good sign to bring a ship to Nationals while still "beta" testing the systems. \*Photo courtesy of Steve Reichenbach

**On Friday morning...** I got out of bed and found that the "super structure" fairy had arrived. The "messychussetts" had become the Massachusetts. Thanks **Steve**... We had breakfast at Cathie's Corner (a "fray" event favorite). I always get the waffle and a side of sausage. Soon, **Brian, Doug,** and **Chris** were off to Michigan while **Steve Reichenbach** had decided that he would accompany me up. We took a bit of time for me to show him a possible new homestead and pond location. I would guess that we were about 30-minutes to an hour behind **Brian's** Suburban. Interesting enough, because of cell phones, we were able to meet up with them again in Saint Louis. Schaeffer's hobby store is a treat to someone that does not have a hobby store in a 2 hour radius. After a short visit to peruse their prop inventory, we agreed to meet up again for dinner.

I had a new friend named Garmin. GPS technology available today is truly amazing. Once we set the destination as Ionia, it did all the navigating. **Steve** and I were sure that we had gotten ahead of the others and were surprised to hear from them on our cell phone that they were at a higher mile marker than us. Wanting to catch up to them, we accelerated to even a "faster" pace. After a few minutes, **Steve** called **Brian**. "**Brian,** where are you at?" "**Steve,** we are at mile marker 234." **Steve** says, "Did you see us pass you?" We are now ahead of you. **Brian** said "no way, we would have seen you". A light bulb comes on over **Steve's** head. What highway are you on? I-70 headed to Indianapolis. Ah, we were on I-55 headed to Chicago. Somehow, in all our conversations, we had failed to ask which road they would be taking... Duh... "Okay, see you in Ionia."

As we passed through Springfield, Illinois, **Steve** and I decided to stop and see some of the historic sites. We pulled off the highway and about 10 minutes later were walking around a very old area of town. No vehicles were allowed there and it looked very much like it probably did 140 years ago. We quickly found Abraham Lincoln's home and I took a couple of pictures. Being mindful of the drive we still had ahead of us, we soon got back out to the interstate and were off.



One cool thing about traveling during Nats is seeing sites you otherwise would not see. This is Abraham Lincoln's home in Springfield, Illinois. The whole old town area was refurbished and walking through it was like going back in time.

At around midnight, we had had enough driving. We stopped in Sawyer, Michigan for the evening. **Chris Grossiant** was about an hour behind us and agreed that he should probably stop and stay with us in Sawyer. He showed up a few hours later and we all crashed.

## Saturday

For breakfast, we had a waffle maker at our disposal. **Steve** decided to give it a try. Spraying "PAM" on it, he poured the mixture of flour and water on the griddle. Soon, he felt ready to get his breakfast. Pulling up on the handle, he was surprised to find his waffle ripped and separated because the top was too sticky. I decided to show him how it was done. When I was 14 years old, I took a job working at an Omelet shop. In about 5 minutes I had a very nice clean waffle to eat. Upon comparison, **Steve** agreed that I deserved to win the "best of scale" waffle award.

After breakfast, we were off again. Using Garmin, we noticed that we were very close to Lake Michigan. Figuring we may never be this way again, we decided that this warranted a quick stop. We soon found a public access point and walked out to the beach. From where we were standing, Lake Michigan appeared to be an ocean.

Deciding to have a bit of fun, I had brought my LST and transmitter to the shoreline. My companions knew what I had in mind. The water was really cold so I quickly tried to launch the LST into the water and not get wet to much. The poor LST got hit by a huge wave and tumbled around terribly. **Chris Grossiant** decided to give it a try and did little better. After a quick laugh we decided to get moving down the road again.

Not long we had arrived in Ionia. The front desk clerk at Super 8 gave us bad news. Some of our group would be on the second floor. Being the first to arrive, he allowed us to check in downstairs. I got room 104. **Chris** and **Steve** got downstairs as well. Also, if a person had an odd numbered room; it was easy to pass things through the window directly into your room. As Captains called us, Steve told them of the bad news.

Still on the road traveling, **Jeff Lide** and the Texas gang had decided to stay in Springfield, Illinois. **Fluegel** was given the honor of choosing the motel. **Jeff** says that there was a “chalk” outline of a dead body in one of the rooms. Needless to say, **Fluegel** did not get to pick any more motels. The next morning, they had a great time talking on handheld walkie talkies; they had the RC warship combat Readers Theater. Using this format, they enjoyed many creative stories surrounding the demise of many Allied ships and their Captains.

That night, **Bryan Finster** found out that many could occupy the motels conference room. This effectively turned a negative into a positive. Now, they could all tell great stories while working on their boats.

### **Sunday (ship testing)**

Many Captains made their way out to the lake to begin ship testing. When I arrived at lakeside, the tents / shipyard was already set up. The hosts of the event really planned ahead and throughout the week, things flowed seamlessly.



Staging area/ shipyard/ and general area for Captains to gather and have a good time. Note the dirt road is the only way in our out of the water front we used. This made for excellent crowd control and created a great venue for lots of zany activities. \*Photo courtesy of Steve Reichenbach

The lake itself is fed by an underground spring. The water is very clear and the bottom is almost completely covered with moss. The area we would battle in was very large and rectangular shaped. The host committee was busy setting up the boundaries and getting the speed course complete. A new twenty foot course was added to test ships in reverse. This year, much attention was to be given to speed going backwards. Several ships were tested using this measurement and all passed under the current rules.



Luiz Negrón working on the speed course while the USS Massachusetts pesters his efforts. \*photo courtesy of Steve Reichenbach

One of the great things about having the event in Michigan is that we got to visit with **Tom Jass** for a few days. For those of you that do not know him, **Tom** has some great stories about the early days in the hobby. One of “my” great memories of past Nat’s is in 1999, when he and I teamed up in a cruiser battle. This brings me to a point I would like to make. It is really great to see old friends and when they are not at Nats, they are greatly missed. (**Lar’s, Curly, Wade, Lou**, etc.), we missed you guys.



D.W. Fluegel and Dallas Fluegel share some "father/son" time. Here the Admiral shows the young Ensign that he missed an area that he was "swabbing" the deck. Cleanliness is always important in the German fleet.

As a testament that even veterans can sometimes mess up, **Chris Pearce** was trying to fix his water tight box. Too make a long story short; an electrical fire got started in his ship.

It is a good thing that this happened on Sunday and not right before battle. It is also a good thing that **Chris** is a seasoned veteran and began immediately getting the problem taken care of. Monday's battle was just around the corner. Would **Chris** be able to fix it in time for battle? We will see...

This year, I had a new paint scheme set up for big Mammie. Black was the order of the day. She had a black bow and stern as well as super structure. As I was designing this scheme, I thought that she would be ugly and that was what I was going for. Too my surprise, many Captains told me throughout the week that they thought my ship was pretty. The reason I had a distinct scheme was I wanted to do some damage to my targets and I wanted them to know who was doing it to them. In the past, I would be shooting somebody up and I would hear others say: "look at **Don Cole**... He is tearing into that ship!!!"

In the weeks leading up to Nat's, **Bryan Finster** really helped me in setting up my ships electrical systems. For three years, I had lost many servos, switches, and felt generally unreliable. My rudders had also been a pain. This year's pair was the third set I tried on the ship. In the past they seemed to wear out the servos used to move them. Finally, big Mammie would be reliable and hopefully a much greater threat.

On Sunday night, most had arrived and all were enjoying getting reacquainted again. My roommates, **Patrick** and **Matthew** (aka: Viper) **Clarke** checked in as well. **Patrick** had two ships that were new to him. The USS Indiana is a ship that he bought from **Ted Brodgen**. **Ted** builds a nice ship but **Patrick** being a consummate perfectionist had

completely stripped it down and had rebuilt it as a very clean and nasty ship. He also brought a light cruiser, the USS Atlanta. This ship is very well thought out with a half unit pump and two “mean” twin stern guns. At 22 seconds speed, nothing on the water could catch it and who would want to eat the bb’s from the cannons even if they could catch it?



Captain Patrick Clarke is always trying to get “perfection” out of his ship. Here he finds something needing a tweak or two.

Walking down the hall, I found several Axis Captains working on their ships in a conference room. **Bryan Finster** had arranged for the club to have access to the meeting room because many of the second floor guys needed the space and comfort it provided.

**Lief Goodson** was among them. I asked **Lief** how he thought the teams were matched up. He told me that he felt very good and that the Axis would win. His logic was that the Axis fleet was made up of mostly 24 second “run and gun” battleships while the Allied fleet was mostly 26 second “turn and burn” type ships. This would be a very interesting battle tactically. Logically, the Axis could mostly outrun the Allied fleet thus giving them the ability to choose “where and when” to engage battle.

I told **Leif** that I felt the Allied fleet would come out victorious because eventually, the Axis would have to engage the Allies. Mostly it all comes down to gunnery. Whichever team can get the most bb’s into the other guys ship(s) would win. The anticipation for battle was starting to be felt by everyone. That night **Admiral Bob** called an Allied Captains meeting. Afterwards, I again felt good that we were in great shape. **Bob** did a great job in planning our battles and had an “air of confidence” that was very reassuring.



Lief Goodson and Kevin Bray show their version of the “Army vs. Navy” game. Go Navy!!! \*photo by Kevin Bray

Everything leading up to this point consisted of having the SoDak ships running together and the QE ships running as teams. After some thought, I suggested to **Admiral Bob** that by having each of the groups set up as 1 SoDak and 1 QE we might be able to get a nasty combination. You see, a SoDak with her triple sterns and a QE with the “haymaker” working together does present a bit of a problem for the opposing fleet. If they worked together well (i.e.: Captains of similar battle styles) they could trap and then kill opposing forces.

**Bob** liked the idea and we began to pair up ships and Captains according to their talents. This one decision had a major impact of the overall event.

On Sunday right after ship testing, the **Axis Admiral, Tim Beckett** held a “Captains meeting” to discuss strategy. It did not take much to get the Axis fleet pumped up for all the anticipated fun the next day. Quickly, Tim paired up his teams.

**Tim’s** strategy was for them not to get “pinned in” near shore and to stay away from the Allied slow ships if possible. They wanted to use “all” of the lake and get at the Allied fast ships (24 second). As it turned out, the parameter of the lake was not as big as they had thought it would be. **Lief, Brian Lamb, and Tim** in the Bismarck’s were to run together. **Bryan Finster /Nagato** and **Jeff Lide/ Kirishima** as a team. **Fluegel/ Baden** and **Luiz Negron/Ostfriesland** ran together while **Randy Stiponovich/VDT** wanted to be a roving maverick (go smurf pirate).



Randy Stiponovich stumbles around with his eyes closed as his Smurf banner waves behind him.



Luiz Negrón... With such glamorous looks, it is easy to see why he has over 100 wives.

## Monday

At each Nat's, Monday morning is filled with Captains meetings, charging CO2 bottles, going over ships systems, loading bb's, and general camaraderie. Soon, battle would be called and Nats will officially begin. **Brian Lamb** (the contest director) called 2 minutes to battle... One side or the other had an "extension" to get a ship or two ready and on the water.



Admiral Bob Hoernamann discusses keeping his head from swelling by using a cap with Captains Chris Grossiant and Kevin Hovis

Finally, the count down was to end. As the seconds before battle approached, I felt what I came all this way for. My heart was beating really fast and the anticipation for what was to follow had all of us acting like kids on Christmas day waiting to open their presents. I asked those around me if they were experiencing the same thing and many agreed that they were most excited.

### ***BATTLE!!!***

Both sides had formed somewhat of a “line”. Just before battle had been called, my wingman (**Steve Reynolds**, I-boat) and I saw 4 Sharnhorst class ships (**Steve Reichenbach, Mark Roe, Mike Tanzillo, Rick King**) setting up way out there.

They were planning on backing in and trying to create a chance for enfilading fire. We decided to challenge them by moving in on their sides. This caused them to change their tactics. Once we arrived, they decided to give up on this strategy and began to give way to our ships.

On the Axis side of things, **Brian Lamb, Lief Goodson** and **Tim Beckett** (all DKM Bismarck) were working as wing men. Early in the sortie, they had the idea of going through the Allied line closer to center/shore. **Tim Beckett** saw an “opening” in the Allied fleet and wanted to “punch” through and get to the other side.

At the same time, two of the Allied Captains, **Chris Grossiant** and **Chris Pearce** (driving North Carolina class ships) had been assigned the “left flank” of the allied line. At the start of the sortie, they played around with some Sharnhorst class ships always keeping in mind their main target, the Bismarck’s. They planned to “counter” any flanking maneuver the large German ships might try.

The reasoning behind this strategy was foretold at the “fray” three weeks earlier. At that event, **Tim** had sunk **Chris Grossiant** (USS Washington) by blowing out a panel using his bow side mount. He had also sunk **Chris Pearce** (USS North Carolina) that same battle. This time, the US ships planned to make sure and avoid **Tim’s** Starboard side. Whenever he started to gain a little advantage on one of the ships, they planned to have the other triple gun **Tim’s** bow area. Working as a team, they would neutralize this threat. Also, the fact that Ionia’s pond was much larger than the “fray” pond favored the US ships.

**Chris Pearce** says that the Axis admiral (**Tim Beckett**, DKM Bismarck) tried to lead the Bismarck’s on an end round run. The **Chris’s** kept them from completing this tactic by closing the gap and forcing them to eat triple stern guns as they approached. The Axis behemoths began to break up as **Lief’s** partner, **Tim** was being kept busy with the NC pair. **Brian Lamb** got lost in the middle and did not come through the hole.

As the German capital ships executed the maneuver and sailed forward, the hole quickly began to close. **Tim Beckett** was able to make it through pretty much unscathed but his wingmen were not so lucky. Several Allied 26 second ships reacted and began to close the hole. Both **Brian Lamb** and **Lief Goodson** came under heavy attack. **Lief** continued to push on, following his Admiral.

Having finally made it through the Allied gauntlet, **Lief’s** Bismarck finally arrived on the other side. The **Chris’s** began to target **Lief’s** juicy bow with their triples. While the NC’s were keeping **Lief** occupied to the left of the pond, **Patrick Clarke**, in his Indiana and **John Bruder**, in his Barham also surprised him by showing up.



John Bruder's Barham. Very well thought out and excellent fighting ship. \*photo courtesy of John Bruder

They “pounced” on **Lief** and trapped him up against the shore. Once there, they began to pound the big ship. With all the attention **Patrick** and **John** had paid **Lief’s** Bismarck, it began to pump heavily. **Lief**, sensing things were not going well, brought his ship closer towards shore.

A huge melee started to form around them with mostly Allied QE and SoDak ships. Splashes of water were boiling up as many bb’s from the Allied ships found their target just at or under the Bismarck’s water line. **Lief** feeling the pain of this attack, began to bring the now heavy with water ship away from the shore line. Acting much like a dying animal, the ship slowly reacted to the Captains commands. Water began to shift inside the ship and she began to list to one side.

About ten feet away **Lief's** war torn ship could no longer withstand the damage and surrendered to the surrounding sea. (99a,10o,20b)

The 26 second fleet of the Allied command had claimed its first victim of the war. Everything leading up to this point was immensely tense. Neither fleet had lost a ship. **Chris Grossiant** remembers wanting to go in and help pound on **Lief's** embattled ship but he says that he could not leave his wingman because **Admiral Beckett** was pressing really hard. As the NC class ships kept **Tim** occupied, this allowed others to come in and pick them apart.



Lief's Bismarck before battle and after too much attention from the Allied 26 second fleet. \*Photo courtesy of Steve Reichenbach

While all this was going on, their other wingman, **Brian Lamb** was having rudder problems. Deciding discretion was the better part of valor, he called "5 out of control". When he called "5", his Bismarck was in the middle of all the Allied 26 second ships. As a result of this, he took a lot of damage but eventually made it off the water without sinking.

## **Second Sortie, Monday A.M.**

Just before battle, “Big Mammie” was acting somewhat erratic. The ship would turn one way but not the other. After bringing my ship back to shore, I misdiagnosed the problem as being a rudder servo. In fact it was actually a new drag prop on the starboard side interfering with the throw of the rudders. I moved it and got my ship in just as battle was called. Losing my head, I wanted to get to my original target, a Bismarck in the back of enemy lines.

Foolishly, I charged ahead right into the front line of the axis ships. Both **Tim Beckett** and **Jeff Lide** were waiting on my ship. Soon, we were side to side and blasting away. I could not believe how silly I was to get into this situation. Trying to make the best of it, I emptied most of one side mount and half of the other. To nobody’s surprise, my ship soon succumbed to the damage and sank. (120a,11o,28b) 4,075 points of damage.

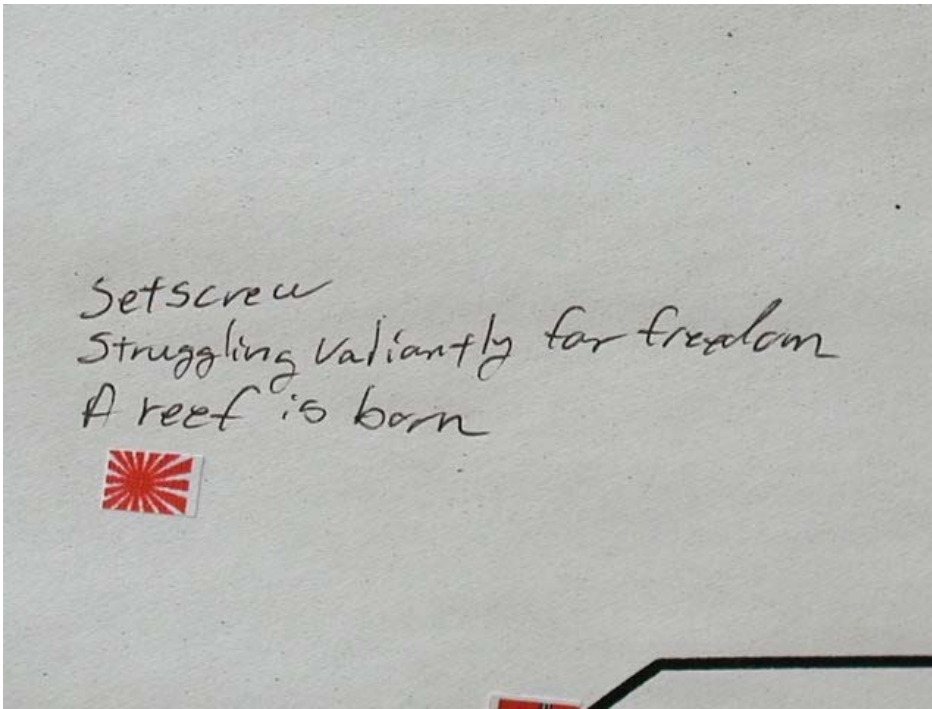
Showing loyalty to his fleet, my wingman, **Steve Reynolds**/ I-boat, told me that he had considered accompanying me into the “charge of death” but quickly decided that he would rather avoid that kind of madness.

Later, **Jeff Lide** told me that the damage he had received in the first sortie combined with the damage I gave him prompted him to immediately call 5 and get off the water. After hearing that, I felt somewhat better but I do not recommend this tactic to anyone.

**Brian Lamb** was gracious enough to hold my transmitter as I retrieved my ship. Once out of the water, I began to assess the condition of my ship. What I did not hear was **Brian** and **Tim** yelling to me to take my transmitter. While this confusion was going on, **Brian’s** Bismarck was getting hammer by **Chris Pearce’s** North Carolina. Sorry **Brian**... again. **Brian** eventually sank due to severe damage inflicted. (70a,32o,62b) 5,800 points of damage.

**Jeff Lide** reports that there was intense battling near shore in the first sortie (i.e. **Lief’s** ship carnage). Because of this, both he and **Bryan Finster** started the second sortie with considerable damage. According to **Jeff** it was at times quite bloody with both sides getting shot up pretty seriously.

**Patrick Clarke** remembers **Bryan Finster** and losing his mobility. **Bryan** quickly called “5 out of control”. Those words are often followed by blood and carnage all around the effected ship. Upon hearing this, several Allied ships began to act like a school of piranha inflicting damage to **Bryan** while **Jeff Lide** (his wingman) tried to support him. In spite of **Jeff’s** attempt to save his partner, **Bryan** sank because of all the attention he had received. **Bryan’s** damage was “most respectable”. (178a,26o,36b) 5,430 points of damage.



Bryan Finster wrote this Haiku describing his ships performance. This was on a map of the pond and about where the ship sank.  
\*Photo courtesy of John Bruder

**Steve Reichenbach** must have tried to come to **Bryan's** aid. Like a fly stuck to “fly paper”, **Steve Reichenbach's** Geniesenau found itself in an area that the Admiral had told them not to venture into. **Kapitan Steve**, realizing that he needed to get out of the area, gave the order to “turn and retreat”. As the ship answered the helm, it began to roll a bit to port. This “list” to one side exposed it's soft underbelly.

**Patrick Clarke** in the USS Indiana was positioned to take advantage of the opportunity presenting itself. As the German passed by his stern guns, “WHAP, WHAP, WHAP!” reported the triple cannons. The sound of balsa “*snapping*” as the projectiles penetrated the hull was unmistakable.

Realizing now that his ship was in trouble, **Kapitan Steve** decided to bring his ship closer into shore should a “wet” recovery prove necessary? This action was like ringing a lunch bell to a bunch of starving children. The QE and SoDak teams converged and in a very short time, they had consumed their prey. This area was to become known as “the meat grinder”. Live prey went in and “kibble and bits” was sent out.

**Don Cole**, USS Alabama, lost control of his ship just at the shore line. After realizing that he was not going to be able to regain control, his veteran experience told him what to do. **Don** “declared” the ship rather than give the enemy the opportunity to pummel it and gain points. Sometimes it is better to take the points loss up front than to make a bad situation worse. As a result, his ship ended the battle with 22a,1o,3b.

Toward the end of the sortie, **Mike Tanzillo's** Sharnhorst seemed to have lost control. His ship continued on a slow journey out to the very edge of the battle lake. His pump

stream slowly increased as his ship began to settle. The pump stream drew a lot of attention and soon several Allied ships came to try and convince the German to go under. Soon, a very pretty sink occurred and **Steve Reichenbach** (already wet from retrieving his boat) volunteered to go in and retrieve her sister ship. (48a,8o,33b)

**Luiz Negron's** ship battled it out with the 26 second Allied fleet. **John Bruder** took "special" interest in the Ostfriesland and after some intense battling, Luiz's ship surrendered to the waves and sank. (4a,1,o,23b)



Luiz's ship during "happier" times \*photo courtesy of John Bruder

### **Monday afternoon**

It was pretty clear to all, that the Axis had been thoroughly skewered, in the morning battle. To change things up **Admiral Tim** had all the Sharnhorsts brought up to the front line. Hopefully this would get them working with the rest of their fleet.

When battle was called, the Axis fleet began to cautiously back towards the Allied fleet and began to engage the QE class ships. To break up the "stalemate", **Chris Pearce** came along with his North Carolina and began to shoot **Steve Reichenbach's** ship. **Steve** reacted by trying to go toe-to-toe with the NC. **Steve's** Sharnhorst got the worse of the exchange and eventually sank from the damage. (93a,22o,28b) All three Sharnhorst class ships sank with **Rick King** (4a,0o,1b), and **Mike Tanzillo** (47a,4o,20b)

**Joe Maxwell**, USS Honolulu, fought bravely but after taking much damage, sank peacefully under the waves. (40a,12o,16b)

In the second sortie, **Chris Grossiant** says that he had rudder issues. But, because the Allied fleet was dominating the battle, he decided to get as many shots off as he could and was one of the last ones off the water. **Chris Pearce** says that he got mossed up. **Tim Beckett** saw this and came in to attack. This began a side mount exchange. With **Chris** limited in his maneuverability, **Tim** got the better of the exchange and **Chris** sank very quickly after this engagement (34a,9o,28b). **Mark Roe** also contributed to this sink with some very well placed triple gun shots.

As proof that Allied targeting was getting better and better, **Bryan Finster's** Nagato found the bottom of the pond with (118a,18o,43b). **Lief's** Bismarck sank with (161a,8o,24b). **Gerald Roberts** Nagato (63a,17o,27b)

As Monday's battling ended, both sides knew that the Allied fleet had won the day.

## Tuesday

Being Allied, I have come to expect the Axis to give a "bonsai" after their meeting. What happened was yet more evidence of their wonderfully wacky behavior. They in unison yelled, Bonsai! Bonsai! Bonsai! Then **Fluegel** began to dance around in the center of their circle with his hands face high and squealing like a stuck pig. It was quite funny. It became known as the "**Fluegel**" dance.





\*In this series of photos, Fluegel shows the “softer” “gentler” side of the German “high” command. \*Photos by Kevin Bray

**Jeff** says that the Axis admiralty decided to start an “orphan” fund. The orphan fund was to be given to the family of the captain that ran headlong into battle. This captain, having no regard for his own wellbeing, would sacrifice his ship for a “predetermined” target. This Kamikaze thinking began to dominate the rest of the week’s Axis tactics.

The Axis had now changed their strategy on Tuesday. **Brian Lamb** and **Steve Reichenbach** became a team. At the start, **Brian** remembers engaging Patrick Clarke while the line was still formed. Coming in along side Patrick they began to exchange side mounts. While his partner was engaged with **Patrick**, **Steve** saw **Tim Krakowski’s** South Carolina and wanted to sink it. (Tim did eventually sink in the first sortie with 64a,5o,4b) Again, **Steve** being somewhat tunnel visioned drove his ship into the middle of the Allied fleet to attack his chosen target. (After all, this was the new tactic that the Axis had adopted).

**Brian Lamb**, being his wingman decided that he did not want to accompany **Steve** into the meat grinder (again). To the QE/Sodak fleets, this was akin to shooting clay pigeons as the targets passed by their guns. The large German ship never even swayed from his focused target. The saying: “Damn the torpedoes... FULL SPEED AHEAD” comes to mind as the ship continued into the mouth of hell. Shortly, several large holes were opened on the Geniesenau’s sides. It was not long till his ship was resting peacefully on the bottom of the pond. (99a,14o,41b)

Witnessing his partners demise, **Brian Lamb**, decided to re-attach his ship to **Tim** and **Lief’s** fleet. They began to trade shots with the team of **Chris Pearce** and **Chris Grossiant**. Both **Lief** and **Brian Lamb** took severe damage as a result of this exchange. On another area of the lake, **Jeff Lide** reports that both he and **Bryan Finster** decided to be less aggressive after getting the damage from the first battle.

At the start of the battle, **Dirty** and **Gerald** came in as reinforcements to the Axis cause. These new targets also became the focus of a lot of attention. With many splashes and the sound of balsa breaking on **Dirty’s** Japanese ship, it did not take long for him to decide to “declare” his ship rather than continue to be shot (4a,0o,0b). His wingman, **Gerald** was not fairing much better. **Chris Pearce** reports that as **Gerald’s** INJ Nagato

was rolling over and sinking he managed to get several triple stern gun hits in the red as the big ship sank.(60a,3o,16b)

**Mike Tanzillo's** Sharny also sank with (144a,6o,24b)

## Tuesday Campaign

Campaign was about to begin. In his usual form, **Admiral Bob** was working hard passing out assignments for convoy ships. I was assigned to drive a medium size carrier. Three of them launched at the same time. One was actually equipped with 2 hidden pumps.



\*Admiral Bob sets up the "Q" ship fleet of carriers. One has a pump and the others do not.

At first, the axis fleet seemed to leave the convoys alone. **Admiral Bob** had anticipated this. His instructions to **Tim Krakowski** (driver of the warship/carrier) were to start going in a circle. "**Tim** what was wrong with your ship?" And **Tim** would reply "the rudder seems to be jammed hard over"!

Sure enough, the Axis battleships came to feed. This tactic depleted many of the bb's they had available on the water. Many convoys made forward and return runs. **Patrick Clarke** spent a lot of his campaign time providing "escort" services with his USS Indiana. During the course of the event, **John Bruder** called "ram". While he was bringing it in for inspection, **Tim Beckett** (not knowing his status) shot the Barham up pretty badly. With luck still on the Allied side, **John** eventually survived the engagement. I drove the LST forward, return, and attempted another forward run. The rudders locked over and the Axis got many hits on the tiny ship. The little LST sank just 20 yards from its forward base.

**Brian Lamb** went out in the second 20 minutes with his DKM Bismarck. He managed to get a good sidemount pass on **Tim Krakowski's** Victory ship. After doing this, he

proceeded to the Allied forward base. Watching intensely, he saw that the US carriers had just been launched for their return run. Maneuvering carefully, he managed to “stern gun” one of them. After that, he noticed **Doug Hunt’s** West Virginia was not doing to well. He and **Bryan Finster** decided to attack the WV and **Brian** emptied his all of his side mount into the ship. Not long after this, **Doug Hunt** was getting wet retrieving a well ventilated ship from the bottom.

**Steve Reichenbach’s** is an amazing builder. During the building season he had built a great looking submarine. Steve decided to launch the little submarine (I-65) and made a forward run. However, on the return run, it got mossed up. Steve says that he forgot that he could call “30 second moss” and while it sat there, **Andy Ray** and **Josh Bruder** came by and gave it 18 below hits. It soon sank there after.

**Jeff Lide** ran his destroyer escort (INJ 13) both on a complete run. It basically made the complete trip uncontested. The small ship was difficult to see as it was painted roughly the same color as the water and was a tiny little booger of a ship. **Jeff** told me later the even he had lost it a few times when he too his eyes off the little ship. Once he got the ship into port, **Jeff** then decided to run his battle cruiser (INJ Kirishima) in search of some unsuspecting enemy warship.

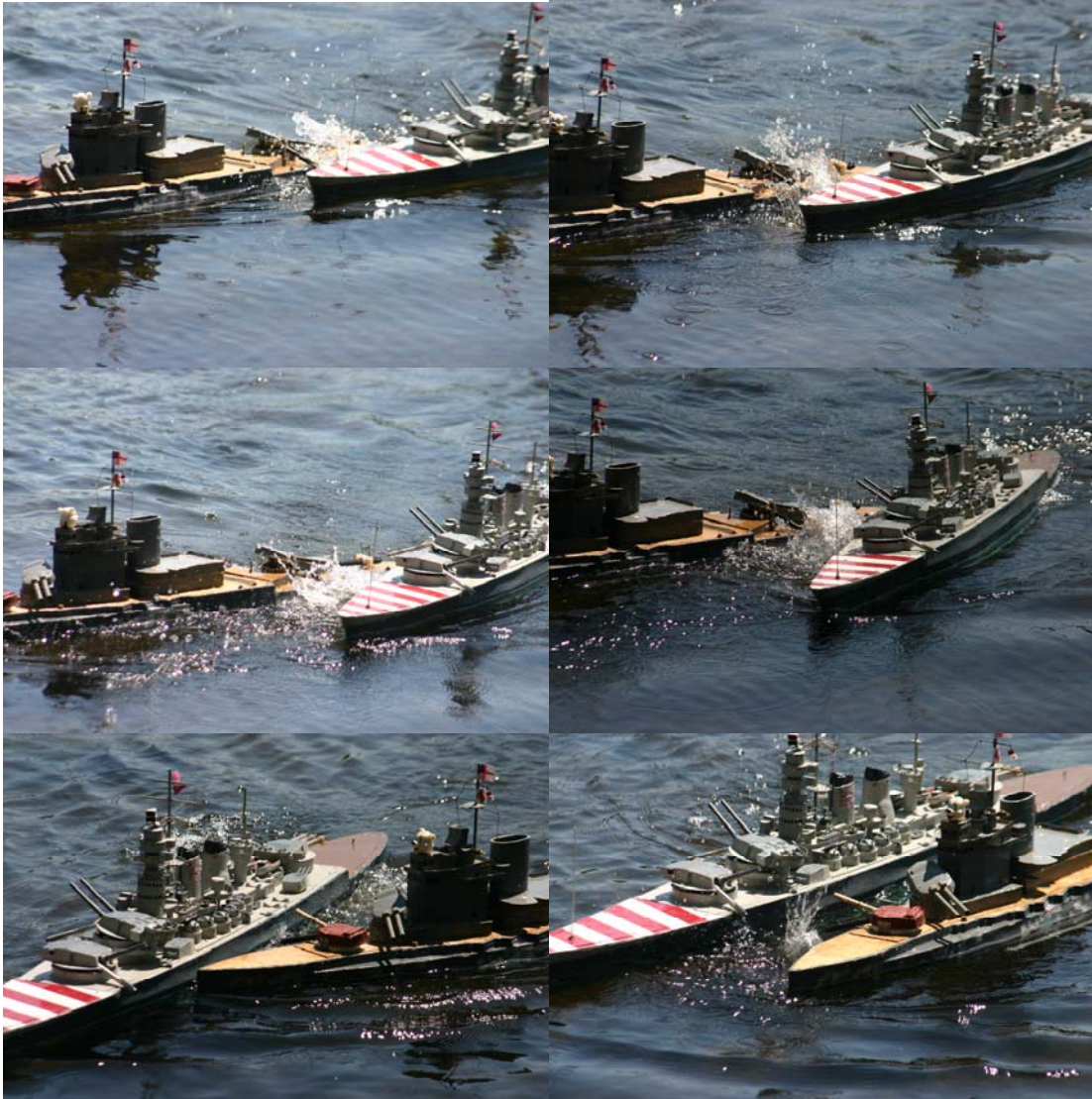
### **Wednesday**

I arrived at the tents and began to ask around about whom might want to battle. **Patrick Clarke** told me that the BOD was going to battle each other for fun. Since he was the only other class 6 ship out there, I waited. After some talk, I was able to arrange for a battle called 4-5-6. The sides where as follows.

Josh Bruder	VV	Class 6
John Bruder	Barham	Class 5
Tim Krakowski	South Carolina	Class 4

Vs:

Kevin Bray	Mammie	Class 6
Bob Hornemann	QE	Class 5
Steve Reynolds	I-boat	Class 4



Admiral Bob's QE and Josh Bruder's VV maneuver for shots. Above you can see Bob's haymaker hitting many times and towards the end, they are exchanging side mount fire.

In this battle, both **Bob** and **Steve** quickly went after the 28 second SoCal. **John Bruder** joined in to assist and I went in to engage **John**. **Josh** worked from the outside to bring his triples to bear. After some time, the SoCal gave way to damage and sank. This left **John** as the only ship that we could catch. **John** battled very well and survived the battle. The second team won the battle.



John and Josh Bruder work on their ships. Here Josh is loading his cannons and preparing for more carnage.

There was a cruiser battle that soon followed. **Jeff Lide** in his INJ Sakawa, **Bryan Finster** in his INJ yahogi and **Dave Au** in his INJ Isusu. **Jeff** reports that he took 113 aboves in the action. This was a two sortie battle. **Patrick Clarke** sank in the Atlanta. **Chris Pearce** had his French cruiser. **Chris** put a lot of holes into the **Clarke's** as well as CAS.

On Tuesday night, I was working on the Massachusetts triple stern guns when the barbette separated from the 1/8<sup>th</sup> inch decking. This was very bad. I tried to get it mounted back but did not have the right tools at the motel to fix the problem correctly. So, I used duct tape to hold it all together. On Wednesday during some 1-1 battles, I realized that the guns were no longer hitting the water behind the ship and were actually shooting super structure... not good.

### Wednesday Night battle

**Brian Lamb** was attacked by **Chris Pearce's** light cruiser. **Chris** put several holes in **Brian** and then left. **Brian** then began to battle with **Patrick Clarke**. **Patrick** had a glow ring around the top of the ship which helped him to identify where it was. The problem is that it also helped the Axis to find it as well. Several shots were exchanged by both sides and **Brian's** damage was minimal and the Axis won night battle. **Bob Hoernemann** had launched with **Patrick** and planned to work with him. **Patrick** mistook **Bob's** ship for the enemy at some point and gave him three triple salvos before his Admiral yelled to stop.

**Jeff Lide** had his cruiser INJ Sakawa. His primary target was **Patrick Clarke** in his USS Indiana. **Jeff** had no damage and reports that this was the first time in his illustrious career in RC warship combat to have “NO” damage.

### **Thursday Morning**

The Axis fleet had decided that since winning Nats was no longer possible, they should seek out victories where they might get them. This gave them the idea of coming up with a “list” of choice targets. **Chris Au** in his French ship was to be the object of their desire. **Jeff Lide** reports that **Lief** was to be the “lead” attacker. Before battle even began, the Axis death ship squadron moved their ships into the heart of the Allied fleet. **Lief** was completely focusing on **Chris Au** and looking to give his children the monies accumulated for his act of selfless passion in dying for his fleet. He soon accomplished this by sinking rather gloriously. **Chris Pearce** remembers putting a lot of damage on **Leif**. He also gave a lot of attention on **Steve Reichenbach**.

**Brian Lamb** remembers getting some good shots on the Massachusetts with his bow side mount. The barbette mounting the triples had broken and the shots appeared to be hitting nothing but super structure. The Axis spent quite a bit of time trying to get their number 1 target, **Chris Au** in the French Strasburg.

**Chris** was quite effective at bringing the Axis ships through the Allied meat grinder and there was a lot of carnage. After some time he decided to come in on a "ram check". Once the “frog” comes to port, he checked it for ram damage. Establishing there is none, he sends it backing out to sea. The ship never even gets the time to turn because it immediately sinks. **Bryan** and **Fluegel** are heard saying, : "Ah... there it is, now, where is number three?"



\*Chris Au's ship sinks by the stern as he struggles to get it back toward shore. Photo courtesy of Bob Hoernaman

**Bryan Finster** after some time says "I want to go after number 4". It is still not obvious at this time who these numbers are. I guess that number two was **Chris Au** and they had completed their goal of sinking him. The Axis Admiral had chosen a "target" ship. **Steve Reichenbach** sank early in the first sortie.

**Brian Lamb** takes his ship closer to shore pumping heavily. John Bruder is chasing him and fires several times. Soon, **Bob Hoernemann** gives chase. **Brian** has to stop and try to pump out. This gives **Bob** the chance to use his "hay maker". The cannon "reports" with rapid fire succession. Soon, the Bismarck rolls to port and give up the fight. As **Brian** is out waist deep, **Tim Beckett** yells to him: "Hey **Brian**..... You are off your five now". Alas, this is to no avail.

**Matt Clarke** (aka: Viper) with his USS Houston caught **Rick King's** Sharnhorst sitting still. He emptied all of his stern guns into **Rick King's** bow.

**John Bruder** is now chased by **Fluegel/Baden** and **Jeff Lide**. **Jeff** gets several nasty stern side mounts on the Barham. **John** calls: "off five" and runs out to get his ship. In a comical move, the ship begins to "back up" away from him. He manages to get grab it before it gets away. Once on shore, inspection of the damage reveals a quarter sized hole in the starboard bow area.

#### **Thursday Afternoon Campaign**

Campaign began much the same. **Bob Hoernemann** began running many allied convoy runs. I tested the LST and found that the rudder servo had died. The wires leading to the plug were coming loose and there appeared to be no easy way to fix it.

**Brian Lamb** went out in the second twenty minutes. He was escorting one of **Mark Roes** convoy ships. One of **Brian's** set screws on the pinion gear/drive system worked itself loose. This caused him to lose all propulsion. Luckily, he was able to call "5" and nobody approached his ship so he survived. **Don Cole** and I gently tug boated **Brian's** now helpless ship to shore. **Brian** had to keep his ship at shore because it was not near one of his ports and had he pulled it, then it would have been scored as a "declared" sink by the rules of campaign.



\* Axis convoy ship sinking by the bow.

**Steve Reichenbach** again appeared with his submarine. It was renamed the K-19 “widow maker” because of a battery blowing up during recharging. It made the forward run and again sank on the return with 3 belows. **Steve** continued to run convoy ships making 2 more complete runs with the Altmark and one of **Mark Roe’s** convoy ships.



- Steve’s submarine is yet another example of how “Campaign” keeps getting better and better. More variety of ships and change in strategy is a welcome thing for many of Nats attendees. Some even prefer campaign to battle.

**Jeff Lide** ran **Brian Finster’s** cruiser INJ yahogi. During the first sortie, the ship was “rolled” over and sank while engaging **Dave Au’s** QE class ship. **Bryan Finster** ran the destroyer escort for a complete run. After this, **Jeff** took his primary warship out and targeted **Josh Bruder** in his VV. With other Axis Captains help, **Josh** eventually sank during Campaign.

**Patrick Clarke** was back on “escort” duty. Towards the last half of campaign, **Patrick** “tugged” the LST to success in a complete forward and return run. Then **Patrick** captained the Titanic successfully also with a complete run. At one point toward the end, **Rick King** got several salvos of triples from **Patrick** as well. **Rick** noted that the **Clarke’s** seem to have a strange attraction for his ship.

**Chris Pearce** reports that he sortied his cruiser three times and his battleship once. In his first sortie with the cruiser he targeted **Leif Goodson**. **Chris Grossiant** and **Dave Au** assisted in the attack. **Leif** must have forgotten to turn on his pump and sank from the damage sustained. On the third sortie, **Chris** teamed up with **Matt Clarke** to sink an axis convoy ship. **Chris** then put his NC on the water. **Dirty Dave** was protecting the axis targets. **Chris Pearce** and **John Bruder** both attacked **Dirty Dave** and sank him with one minute to go in campaign.

### **Friday Morning**

The entire Axis fleet was bent on sinking **Chris Grossiant**. As the battle began, **Brian Lamb** remembers seeing just the largest furball he has ever seen. All the ships seemed to meet together right in front of us. The Axis ships were doing everything they could to single out **Chris Grossiant**. The Allied ships were doing everything they could to keep the Axis from getting to **Chris**.

What ended up happening was while the Axis ships were trying to maneuver, the Allied’s were either “tee boning” or side mounting them as they went by. **Brian Lamb** remembers getting lucky and with some finesse he was able to bring his starboard bow sidemount to bear on **Chris’s** ship. **Don Cole** began to triple **Brian Lamb** blowing a nice ½” by 2” hole in his port side bow. This caused **Brian** to have to limit his maneuvering. **Brian** spent all of his ammo and got off the water fast. **Jeff Lide** reports that he ran his ship right into the middle of the Allied fleet. He says that he took many triple shots to the bow as well as several side mounts from the Massachusetts. He managed to get all his ammo used and called 5. With serious damage, it would be interesting to see if he could stay afloat in the last sortie. One of **Chris Pearce’s** drive shafts came lose so he did not assist much to protect **Grossiant**. Still, **Chris** remembers pumping lots of guns into **Bryan Finster**.

As the first sortie was winding down, I brought in big Mammie. A really bad sounding noise was coming from the pump motor. It sounded like it was tearing itself up inside. Because I standardize on the Swampy large pump, I had a spare that I could easily change out. This would actually cause me problems in the second sortie.

The second sortie, **Brian Lamb** was pumping pretty hard. He had thought that **Chris Grossiant** was sunk and after realizing this was not the case, he proceeded to finish the job. Going head long into the Allied fleet, he quickly found that each of his guns had a target simultaneously. He fired all his guns in a flurry of hot action. Of course, his enemies were firing back and after about two minutes from this, **Brian’s** ship sank.

**Jeff Lide** went back into the furball. **Chris Grossiant** being the main target finally succumbed to the attention he had received from the Axis fleet and sank. **Jeff Lide** also sank very shortly after that.

As I said earlier, the Massachusetts had the “spare” pump in the ship. Again, as the sortie began to wind down, I noticed that the ship was looking rather low in the water. The pump stream was working but only at about 1/10<sup>th</sup> of the rate it should be. At first I thought that the battery was getting low so I brought the ship in close to shore. About the time she got there, she sank. Upon retrieving the ship, the pump lit off and began to spray a very healthy stream of water. This is when I remembered why that pump was my “back up”. It had problems priming. I had tried several things to correct the problem but in the end, just replaced it with a new one. Lessons are always being learned in this hobby.

The fleet Admirals, **Bob Hoernemann** – Allied and **Tim Beckett** – Axis, had planned a “death match”. **Bob** commands the HMS Warspite while **Tim** drives the DKM Bismarck. With both ships in the water, battle was called.

**Bob** typically likes to just get along someone and begin exchanging bb's. **Tim** has a bit more finesse and since both have stern side hay maker guns, they began to exchange fire. **Bob** reports that **Tim** would back into his ship and begin to “push” it over a bit. Then when the angle was right, **Tim** would take a stern side mount shot. **Bob** quickly realized that he was not going to get the better of that deal so he began to drive forward and look for another way to battle the Bismarck.

**Tim's** tactic changed as well. **Tim** began to try and put his bow side mount on **Bob's** ship. **Bob's** defense was to go into a turn and bring his “hay maker” into range. Not long after this started, **Tim** called “5 out of control”. Much like the real Bismarck, **Tim's** ship had lost the use of its rudders. He was stuck in a turn and **Bob** was there to take advantage of it. As many can tell you, it is better to be “lucky” than “good”. Fortunately for **Tim**, he is often both. **Bob** reports that his ship too, suddenly lost rudder control and both of them were left trying to back up or turn to fight as they could neither of them go in a straight line. Finally, **Tim's** 5 minutes was up and they brought their ships in to reload.

After the first sortie was over, both ships seemed to be pumping water fairly well. They reloaded and began to battle again. In the second sortie, **Bob's** ship began to get low in the water as his pump motor screamed to try and keep up. Alas, the water won out and the Warspite slipped under the waves. **Bob** ended the battle with 79 above, 7 on, and 49 below. **Tim's** Bismarck had 13 above, 7 on, and 30 below. The difference in points was 1360 and Bob lost the battle.

After battle on Friday, several of us stayed to battle 1-1 competitions. This was the best way to break ties in the scoring over the past weeks battling. **Josh Bruder**, **Patrick Clarke**, and I agreed to battle each other. I also have a standing challenge with **Tim**

**Krakowski** every year. We finally were able to complete it and **Tim** proved as always to be a great sportsman.

The Banquet was held across the street from the motel we were staying at. Some really great door prizes were drawn for. I got some great tinted safety glasses and a bronze Dumas propeller.

The awards went as follows:

Best of Class 1-2	Dallas Fluegel
Best of Class 3	Joe Maxwell
Best of Class 4	Steve Reynolds
Best of Class 5	John Bruder
Best of Class 6	Josh Bruder
Individual Combat	Kevin Bray
Founders trophy	Kevin Bray
Best of scale, warship	Steve Reichenbach
Best of scale, convoy	Tim Krakowski
Most feared Allied	Chris Pearce
Most feared Axis	Tim Beckett
Sportsman	Tim Beckett
Best Dressed	Jeff Lide

On the drive home, with spirits high, the Axis Texas armada had a great time playing “name that tune”... It was one of the best Nats ever.

### **Tim Krakowski gave me this list of Nats Superlatives:**

Coollest Props: Luis had these Octura cast bronze props.

<http://www.aeromarinerc.com/octura.htm> Wicked.

Coollest Deck Latch: **Finster's** Agano uses rare earth magnets to hold his rear superstructure on. It was a quick and strong latch. He could easily reload his cannons for campaign!

Coollest Superstructure Material: **John Bruder's** Barnham sported a SS made of ABS plastic. Light weight and BB proof. Definitely a winning combination. (Nats fact: My DKM Lutzow was the first ship to sport this plastic in the hobby, it was 1999)

Coollest convoy ship: Tie between **Steve R's** Sub and **Jeff Lide's** Tokyo Express DE and **Mark Roe's** Bremen.

Coollest sink: **Tim Beckett's** Bismarck finally going down on Friday. In my humble opinion, **Tim's** ships have the best damage control in the hobby, and it took the entire Allied fleet to sink him. And he almost didn't go down then!

Coollest Rookie Building feat: **Graham Kozak's** Brooklyn sank in campaign on Thursday (or was it Tuesday?) Anyway, his ship was on the bottom for an hour. When he recovered it the box had only a thimble-full of water in it. He did not miss a sortie! Great building **Graham!**

Coollest New Dance: "**The Fluegal**" EEE

Coollest Battle: Cruiser Battle on Wednesday.

Coollest Weather: of any NATS yet... Awesome....

Most unbelievable furball: Friday AM, second sortie. I personally emptied my guns in less than 20 seconds from point blank range - as did just about everyone else. Much damage was given. Much damage was taken. Many ships sank. Oh the humanity.

Saddest moment: Not being able to video tape the Most Unbelievable Furball.

**TimK's** best 5 at the whole NATS: Having a spare Rx battery to loan **Fluegal** on Tuesday morning.

TimK's worst 5 at the whole NATS: **Fluegal**, using my Rx battery, along with **Randy** and **Luis** proceeding to sink my ship. And they didn't even wait until the second sortie!

Scariest Place on the pond: Tie between the Bermuda Triangle, where just about everyone glitched, and **Finster's** Hole (don't go there)

Best Ice Cream: Corner Scoop

Best Halo 2 Player: **Josh Bruder**. Our scores went something like this: **Josh** 25, **Matt Clarke** 21, **Tim Krakowski** 4

Best line at NATS: "You do know that you need to bring a ship, right?" - **Lief Goodson** to **Tim Krakowski** as they were loading up his van with the junk Tim was bringing to the pond Monday morning.