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NEWSLETTER

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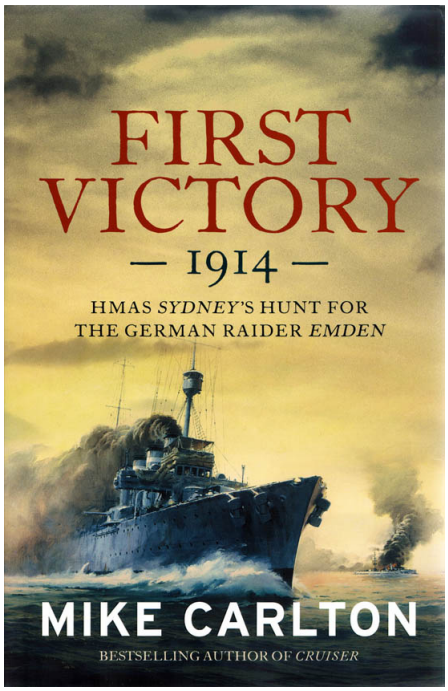
Ensign's report *1st January 2014*

Writing exclusively for the BMBG Newsletter this month we have Don beginning an account of the building of his latest model, the Mars.

Members are reminded of standing orders requiring them to have a safe and happy New Year.

First Victory: 1914 - a book review



First Victory: 1914 by Mike Carlton, published by William Heinemann: Australia 2013, 468pages hardback.

Another detailed historical account by the journalist Mike Carlton, *First Victory: 1914* tells the story of the cruiser HMAS Sydney in WW1, culminating in its sinking of the German light cruiser Emden in the Battle of Cocos.

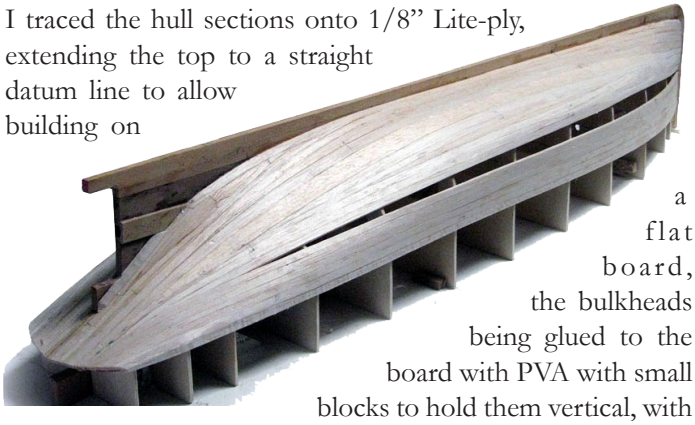
This battle was significant in that it marked the first blooding of the Royal Australian Navy as a fighting force after its formation just a year earlier in October 1913.

Answering an SOS call from Direction Island that referred to there being a strange ship in the harbour, the Sydney was able to surprise the Emden as its raiding crew were taking control of the wireless station. Emden abandoned its raiding party to do battle with the Sydney and was badly damaged by the Sydney's superior fire power, causing the captain, von Muller, to beach his ship on North Keeling Island.

Highly recommended summer reading for those interested in Australian naval history.

The Making of Mars by Don (part one)

I picked Mars from Float-A-Boat's plans catalogue as it was a distinctive design with a place in Australian nautical history, serving from 1891 to 1947, based at Queenscliff. I stuck to the plan size of 1/24 as we have a number of boats in our group to this scale.

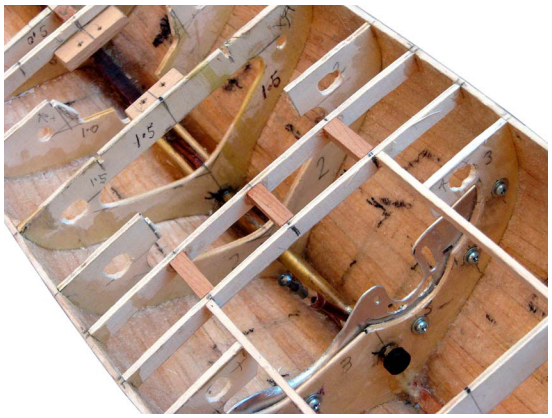


I traced the hull sections onto 1/8" Lite-ply, extending the top to a straight datum line to allow building on a flat board, the bulkheads being glued to the board with PVA with small blocks to hold them vertical, with the deck line part cut to facilitate trimming later. The keel assembly, with stem and stern post, and a cutout for the prop. shaft tube was then glued in to hold the bulkheads in place.

The hull was planked with strips of 1/8" balsa (I had old stock) strips of varying widths, tapered to fit where required. I used medium super glue, which works well, but I had problems with the fumes, which caused a chronic runny nose. I will try the low odour type next time.

I covered the inside with rough fibreglass cloth and polyester resin to stiffen it before sanding the outside, which I covered with two layers of 85 gsm glass cloth and polyester, applying the second coat as the first started to set, then coating the surface with filled polyester to give a sandable skin over the glass cloth. When cured I sanded the surface with progressively finer wet/dry paper and water.

After fitting mounts for the motor, prop shaft, and radio gear, I fitted the deck in four panels (0.4mm ply), using epoxy resin and clamping in place with elastic cord and clamps. I then applied the deck planking of 0.4mm basswood, marking the edges with a black felt-tip pen (waterproof) to simulate caulking; I marked the end grain with a black ball point as the felt tip tends to wick into end grain.



I started with super glue, but again had trouble with fumes, so I then used outdoor PVA, which works fairly quickly, but I held the planks in position with pins to hold the curves. This was a slower process, but I felt better. I finished the deck with satin clear varnish (three coats, sanding between). *(To be continued.)*