

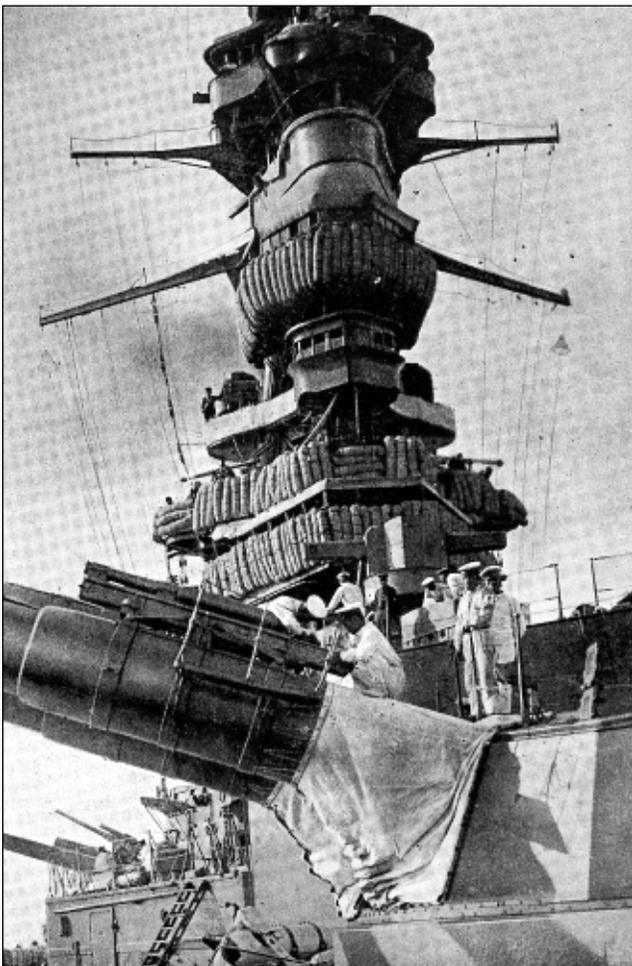


# Colorado Military Historians

Newsletter

XXXVI, No. 2

February 2010



Japanese Battleship

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Japanese Battleship Kongo (GHQ model)

# CMH Events

*Message from CMH President*

*Binhan Lin*



The February monthly meeting has been moved up to the first Sunday (7<sup>th</sup>) to avoid conflict with Valentines Day and Genghis Con. It will conflict with the Superbowl; but that does not start until 4pm. Also, a reminder that your 2010 membership fee is due.

The next local convention is Genghis Con is February 11-14. As a side note, the historical Genghis Khan exhibit at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science is only in town until February 7th.

We are still looking for a coordinator for West Wars 2010. If you are interested in becoming co-coordinator or volunteering to assist or run games at West Wars, please contact me. Currently we are looking to host an area qualifier for Flames of War at West Wars, if you have in interest in this, please contact me.

## New Contributor

*Message from CMH Secretary*

*Eric Elder*

This month we have a new contributor to the newsletter, John Brown. John Brown has been writing articles for Army Magazine since 2006, and is graciously allowing some to be republished in this newsletter. For those that may not know (like myself until recently) John was chief of military history at the U.S. Army Center of Military History from December 1998 to October 2005. An interesting side note, he commanded the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 66<sup>th</sup> Armor, in Iraq and Kuwait during the Gulf War. Look for more of his articles in upcoming CMH newsletters. Also contributing this month, Binhan writes an after-action report of his Naval '44 demo game.



The last monthly meeting had great attendance with five games on the go. I saw another Black Powder ACW game being played with lots of interest. One of these days I will get to try out the rules. John Mumby was playtesting an ACW game. There was the regular DBM game. Gary was running a WWII desert armor battle. I got to playtest my Korean War game to get ready for Genghis Con. Overall I would say we had another successful meeting.

The club is still outstanding on a number of members that need to pay their dues. You can pay your dues to any Board Member in person at any club meeting, or you can mail your dues to me at my address found on the last page of this newsletter. Our dues pay for use of the Baker facility and also gives you a 10% discount at Valhallas and Attactix.

# Successful General Officer Leadership in World War II

*Article by CMH member*

*John Brown*

*Originally published in ARMY Magazine, January 2006*

Our Army Chief of Staff often speaks of guaranteeing a “bench” of senior leaders capable of meeting the demands of the twenty-first century. One of our nation’s greatest success stories has been its mobilization for and conduct of World War II. The United States Army’s general officer performance was particularly noteworthy. How was it that men theretofore so thinly exposed to modern military technology, large units or overseas cultures ultimately conducted blitzkriegs more dynamic than the far more experienced Germans, led organizations larger and more complex than ever fielded before, and effectively governed millions of conquered or liberated peoples?

Postwar Chief of Staff General J. Lawton Collins had a singular answer: “The thing that saved the American Army was the school system”. Built incrementally since the nineteenth century, the Army school system featured branch, command and staff, and senior staff instruction appropriate to officers at different levels as their careers progressed. This common professional base and standard for competent staff work were invaluable. For the generals of World War II the schools had provided yet another formative experience. Virtually all taught on interwar faculties within the system, most for a number of years. This, and concomitant reflection and doctrinal development, deepened their appreciation of things they could not at the time experience physically.

Perhaps even more valuable than knowledge per se was experience training and educating subordinates. Once mobilization began in earnest, most training for commanders, staffs and troops occurred within the newly organized divisions. These consisted of huge masses of volunteers and draftees led by tiny cadres of

experienced Soldiers. A 15,000 man new division received about four hundred significantly experienced Soldiers – evenly split between officers and NCOs. Division staffs had a handful of Leavenworth graduates, and regimental and battalion staffs few or none at all. Seasoned veterans operated several ranks above their prewar experience. Pedagogic experience proved invaluable for division commanders training subordinate commanders and staffs, who in turn trained their Soldiers. The World War II Army Training Program was standardized, methodical, and progressive -- and congenial to those who taught its antecedents in the Army school system.

Faculty experience was no silver bullet. Much taught in the interwar years did not fit World War II demands, and much that would have had not been taught. Students and observers, even Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall himself, characterized the interwar curriculum as too rigid, confining and fixated on “the school solution.” It was more likely to guarantee American divisions would be well managed than well led. Fortunately, the general officers of World War II had ingrained habits of reading that positioned them for further intellectual growth. Until 1920 promotion through the rank of major depended upon competitive examinations, and junior officers equated career progression with study and reflection. Mentors reinforced this instinct. Throughout the interwar years it was not unusual for a unit’s officers to spend an afternoon discussing books they had recently read while their NCOs minded the troops. Officers knew they were in a skeletal and under funded army, and read thoughtfully to compensate.

Not all World War II generals were equally

successful. Five corps commanders and sixteen division commanders were relieved for cause overseas. If one compares their biographies with an equivalent number of demonstrably successful commanders, interesting patterns emerge. The successful and the relieved spent equivalent time as students and faculty in the Army school system. They also averaged roughly the same years of service, troop duty, and combat experience (in World War I). The two samples diverge with respect to field grade command time and high level staff time. The successful averaged twice as much field grade command time overall, and three times as much within the last ten years, as their relieved counterparts. Successful corps commanders had half again as much division command time as relieved corps commanders. The relieved commanders, on the other hand, had about twice as much service on high level staffs.

These statistics can be partially explained by the working mechanics of the mobilization. The Army ballooned in size after 1939 and exploded after Pearl Harbor. This growth catapulted experienced officers through the ranks quickly. Lucky ones acquired field grade command in the three years of growth, development and unprecedented maneuver training that separated the onset of crisis from deployment overseas. These commanders shook off interwar cobwebs and experienced commanding large numbers in a mechanized army. Nothing in the interwar Army could have matched this galvanizing experience. As these commanders gained mastery of

command at one level, further Army growth carried them on to another. Meanwhile less fortunate colleagues were trapped on high level staffs that also grew dramatically, pushing them through the ranks without further troop experience. When these men finally returned to troops they were very senior officers; their opportunities for practical experience came too little and too late. There were exceptions on both sides of this paradigm, of course.

The World War II formula for general officer success seems to have included appreciable faculty experience, habits of reading and reflection, and recent field grade command. How does this compare with our more recent Army? The uniformly successful Division Commanders of Desert Storm had about the same years of service and troop duty as their World War II counterparts. They averaged 23 months in combat (in Vietnam) versus 4 (in World War I), and 42 months of field grade command versus 23. At 58 months they had spent more than twice as much time on high level staffs. They averaged a little over a year as instructors – almost exclusively in branch schools – less than a third of the time spent by their World War II counterparts. This does not seem to have hurt them much. On the other hand, they fought the war they had prepared for a generation to fight, and assumed command of divisions already thoroughly prepared for such a war as well. Had either not been true, the relative thinness of their academic exposure might have mattered more.

#### Recommended Reading:

Berlin, Robert H. "United States Army World War II Commanders: A Composite Biography," *The Journal of Military History* 53 (April, 1989)

Brown, John S. *Draftee Division: The 88th Infantry Division in World War II* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University of Kentucky Press, 1986)

Wade, Gary, *World War II Division Commanders* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute, 1983)

# January Monthly Meeting

## Unit of the Month

Sponsored by Attactix



Each month CMH members bring their latest painted figures and models to the meeting to display their latest efforts and compete for Unit of the Month. The owner of the winning unit receives a gift certificate from Attactix in Aurora, Colorado. We thank Attactix for its continued support.

CMH Member	Scale	Era	Unit
Eric Elder	N	Korean War	105mm US Artillery
<b>BINHAN LIN</b>	15mm	WWII	Panzer Grenadier Anti-Tank
Doug Wildfong	28mm	WWII	Pz III L tank
Doug Wildfong	28mm	WWII	Sfkz 251-1 halftrack

**Table: Unit of the Month (WINNER)**

# Naval '44 Campaign Demo Game Narrative

## The Battle of Makatid Strait – August 1942

*After action report by CMH President  
Binhan Lin*

In support of the landings on Guadalcanal by American forces, Task Force H under Admiral Hiesterman provided shore bombardment and support duties. From his flagship, the battleship USS Tennessee, Admiral Hiesterman directed fire onto shore positions throughout the day. As dusk approached, the task force was ordered to withdraw due to potential danger from Japanese submarines. Unfortunately the American ships did not clear the Makitid Strait before a Japanese Task Force led by Admiral Daniel-san closed the gap and engaged.

At 5:01PM Task Force H was sighted by a flight of Betty bombers, which attacked at low level. The bombers targeted the Massachusetts and released a rain of 250 kg bombs. One bomb penetrated deep into the ship and two other surface hits caused critical damage to fire control and started a fire below deck just aft of Turret #3. Realizing his fleet had been engaged; Admiral Hiesterman sent Destroyer Flotillas 31 and 32 to form a screen against the oncoming Japanese fleet.

Admiral Daniel-san advanced his second squadron, trying to bring the battleship Nagato into range. Trying to bull his way through the Japanese lines, Admiral Hiesterman gave orders to his two battleships to steam at full speed ahead. Soon the USS Tennessee and USS Massachusetts were in accurate firing range of the Japanese light cruisers and sent an opening salvo, damaging the IJN Myoko and IJN Naka.

Around 5:22 PM, the Nagato entered firing range and fired a salvo at the Tennessee, with one shell landing at the fore, penetrating just above the armor belt but causing no significant damage. The Tennessee and Massachusetts continued to pound the Naka and opened fire on the Sendai, another light cruiser, causing heavy damage – fires broke out on both cruisers and several guns and fire directors were knocked out.

Advancing under the heavy fire, the Japanese 2nd Squadron continued to close while the Nagato sustained its long-range fire on the Tennessee with minimal effect.

Flying low from the East a flight of B5N Kate torpedo bombers caught the Americans unaware, and launched several torpedoes. Only one torpedo hit the Tennessee but a defective trigger rendered it a dud as the glancing blow failed to set it off. Meanwhile, Admiral Hiesterman attempted to screen his battlewagons with destroyers from Squadron 3 as he saw the approaching Japanese destroyers as a serious threat.

The IJN Kongo reached long-range and opened fire on the Massachusetts, lightly damaging the aft tower and funnel. The southern Japanese squadron continued to advance and landed a solid hit on the Massachusetts. Admiral Hiesterman ordered the USS Brooklyn and USS Cleveland along with Destroyer Flotilla 21 to screen the Tennessee from advancing Japanese destroyers.

Two Japanese Destroyer flotillas closed on the defending American destroyers and there was a heavy exchange of salvos at close range, with the loss of three Japanese destroyers – the IJN Nadakaze, IJN Numakaze and the IJN Yuri. The Americans lost the USS Fullam and Dashiell while the USS Little was

heavily damaged.

From high overhead, a flight of D4Y Judy divebombers flashed as the setting sun reflected off their canopies as they began their steep attack dives. Six bombs were dropped but the only result was two near-misses which scared the crews on the deck of the already heavily damaged Massachusetts, but did nothing more than splash water into eighty foot tall fountains. Meanwhile, continued fire from the Massachusetts sank the Japanese light cruiser Myoko – heavy shells penetrating deep into the ammunition bunkers, causing a ripping explosion that broke her back. The Myoko sank quickly taking over 500 of her crew with her.

Concentrating their fire on the Nagato, the Tennessee and Massachusetts sent more heavy shells crashing through the deck and fore turrets, knocking out several guns. Admiral Daniel-san replied with combined salvos from the Nagato and Kongo at the Massachusetts, which was too much for the “Big Mamie” as she began to list heavily to starboard. The shock also broke the water pipes feeding the fire control hoses below decks and the fire, which had started earlier, soon ran out of control and the order was given to flood the magazines to prevent them from exploding. The extra water weight would soon cause the Big Mamie to sink and the order was given to abandon ship.

American Destroyer Flotillas 31 and 32 continued to give good accounts of themselves with highly accurate gunnery and some short range torpedo work to obliterate a Japanese destroyer flotilla.

The battle had turned with the demise of the Massachusetts, but unable to break off, Admiral Hiesterman continued to press on, hoping to inflict grievous damage to the Japanese battlewagons. However, the closing Japanese destroyers inflicted fatal damage to the Cleveland with three torpedoes hitting her port side, two aft damaging the engine rooms and rudder and the third blowing a hole just forward of the first turret. The rapid flooding and loss of electrical power from the engine room led to the Cleveland being knocked out of the battle.

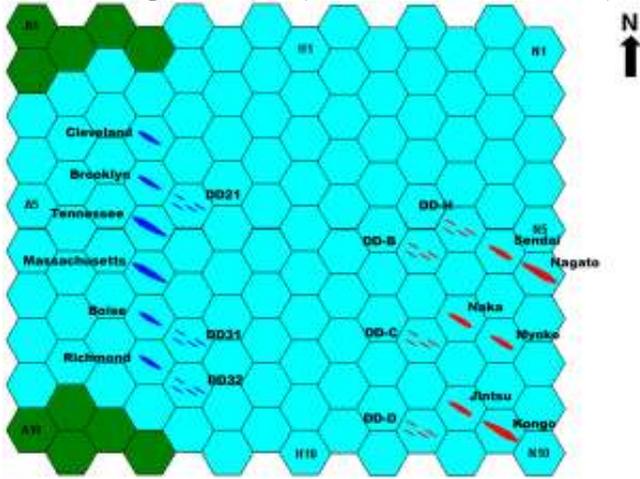
Furious fighting among the smaller ships of each fleet led to the sinking of the IJN Jinsu and multiple destroyers while the battlewagons continued to slug it out.

As the sun fell below the horizon in the West, a final set of salvos whistled through the air, crashing down on the battlewagons, but unable to cause a fatal blow.

The Japanese had lost eleven destroyers and two cruisers, but the Americans had been struck a crippling blow with the loss of the USS Massachusetts, the USS Cleveland and five destroyers.

### Initial Setup Map

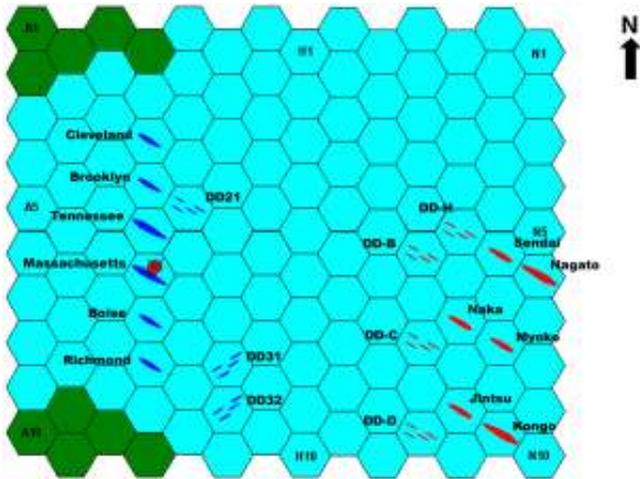
Side A – Japanese (Red) Side B – American (Blue)



### Turn 1

Japanese Fleet – Medium Bomber attack on Massachusetts –Hit for 2H 2DL 1L, Badly Damaged

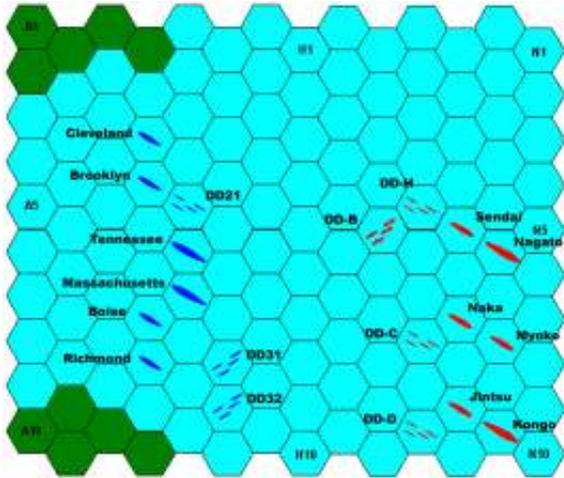
American Fleet – Activate DD31 and DD32



### Turn 2

Japanese Fleet – Activate Squadron 2

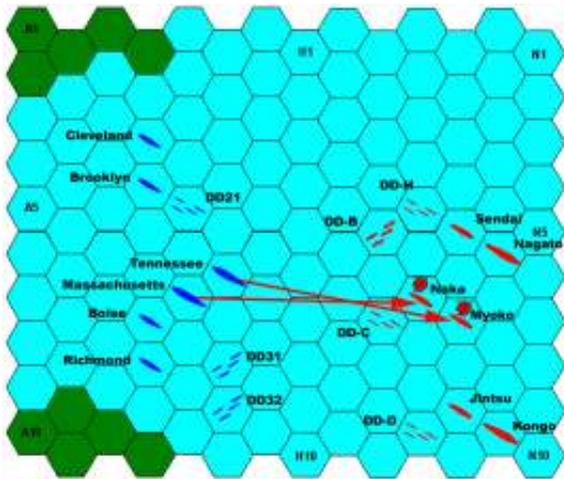
American Fleet – Activate Tennessee and Massachusetts



### Turn 3

Japanese Fleet – Activate Squadron 1

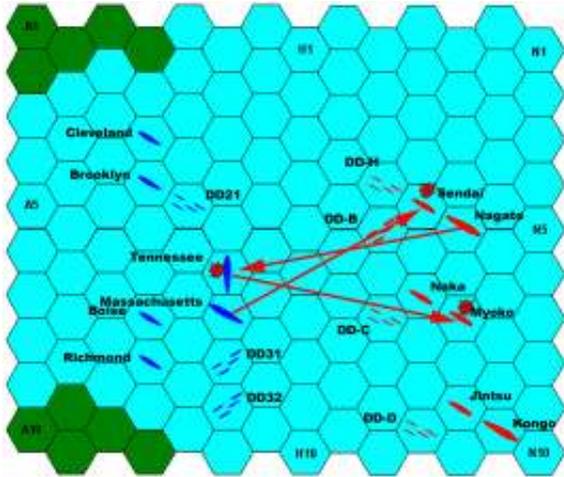
American Fleet – Activate Tennessee and Massachusetts – Firing on Myoko – 1H and Naka – 1L



### Turn 4

Japanese Fleet – Activate DD-H, Sendai, and Nagato – Firing on Tennessee – 1H

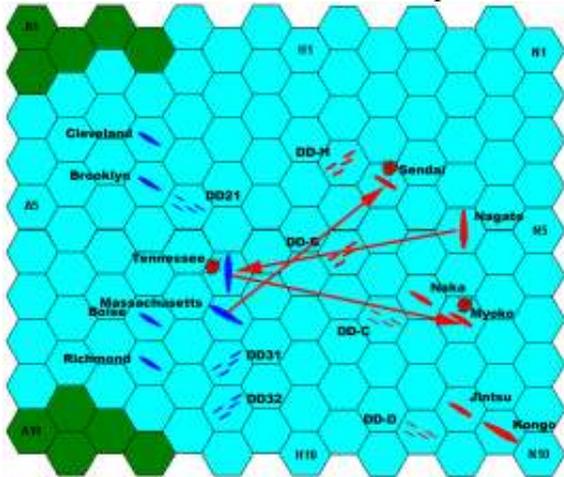
American Fleet – Activate Tenn. and Mass. – Firing on Myoko – 1H, Badly Damaged and Sendai – 3DL  
1L, Badly damaged



### Turn 5

Japanese Fleet – Activate Squadron 2 – Nagato Firing on Tennessee – 1DL

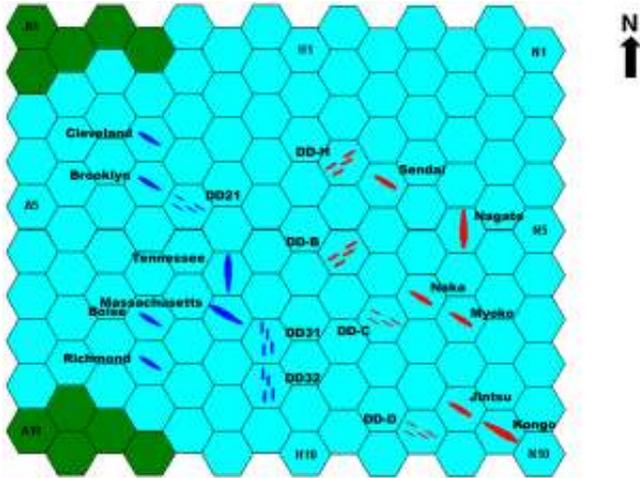
American Fleet – Activate Squadron 3 – Firing on Myoko – 1H 1L and Sendai – 2DL



### Turn 6

Japanese Fleet – Torpedo Bomber attack on Tennessee – No Hits

American Fleet – Activate DD Flotilla 31 and DD Flotilla 32



### Turn 7

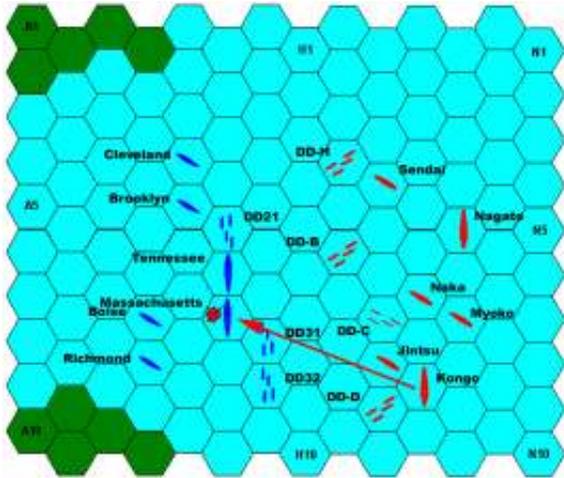
Japanese Fleet – Activate DD-D, Jintsu and Kongo – Firing on Massachusetts – 2L

American Fleet – Activate Massachusetts – Firing on Myoko – No Hits



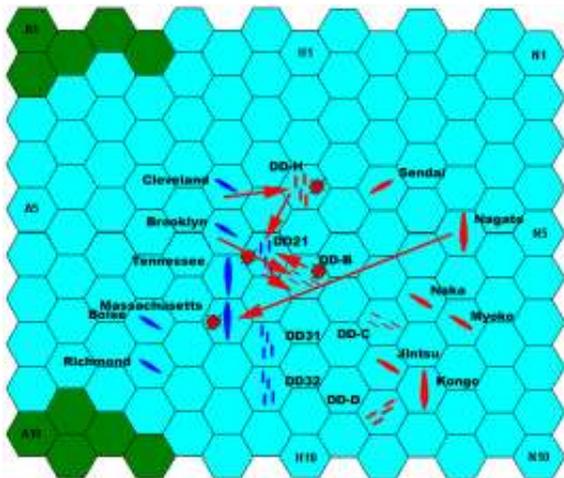
### Turn 8

Japanese Fleet – Activate Jintsu and Kongo – Firing on Massachusetts – 1H  
American Fleet – Activate DD Flotilla 21, Brooklyn and Cleveland



### Turn 9

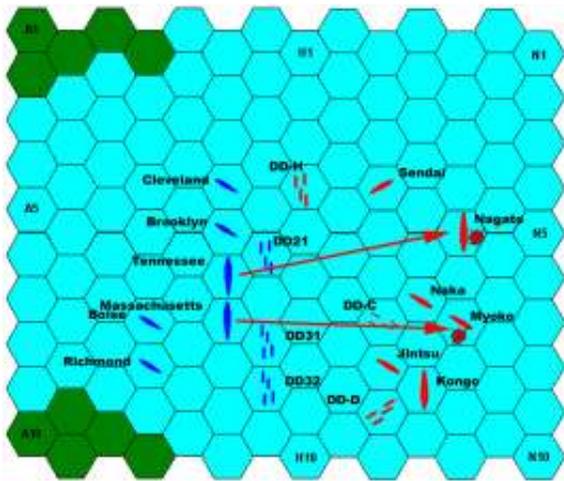
Japanese Fleet – Activate DD-B, DD-H, Sendai and Nagato – Firing on DD Flot. 21- 4L, Massachusetts – 1DL  
American Fleet – Activate DD Flotilla 21, Brooklyn and Cleveland – Firing on DD-B - 1H 1DL 3L (E), DD-H –2L



### Turn 10

Japanese Fleet – Dive Bombers – Firing on Massachusetts – No Hits

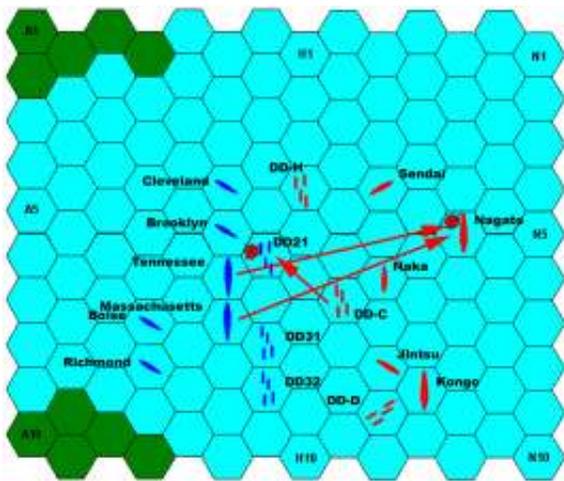
American Fleet – Activate Massachusetts and Tennessee– Firing on Myoko – 1H (E), Nagato – 1DL 1L



### Turn 11

Japanese Fleet – Activate DD-C, Naka and Nagato – Firing on DD Flot. 21- 1DL 1L

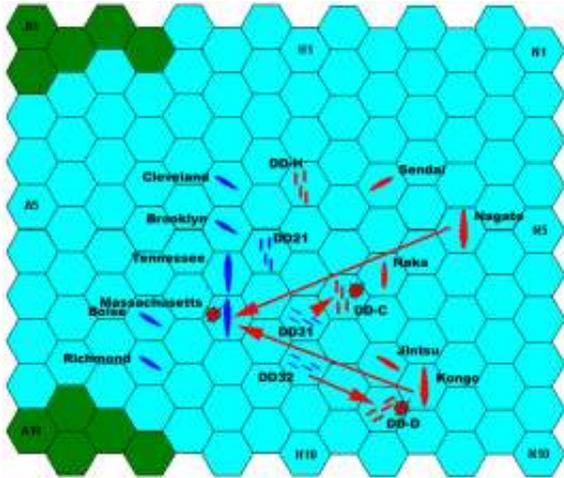
American Fleet – Activate Massachusetts and Tennessee– Firing on Nagato – 1DL 4L Badly Damaged



### Turn 12

Japanese Fleet – Activate Kongo and Nagato – Firing on Massachusetts – 2H 2DL 2L (E)

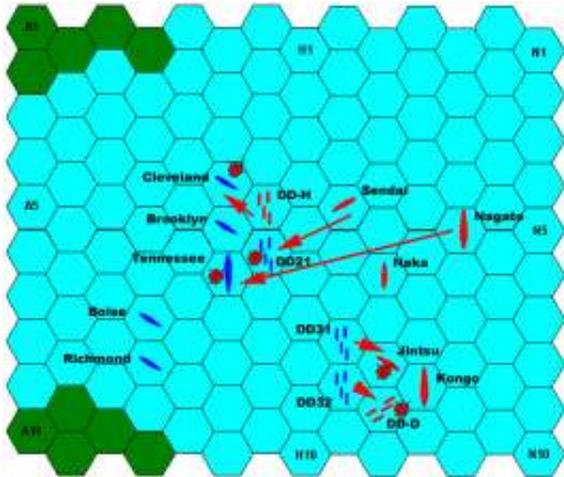
American Fleet – Activate DD-31 and DD-32 – Firing on DD-C – 4H (E), DD-D – 1DL 1L



### Turn 13

Japanese Fleet – Activate DD-H, Sendai and Nagato – Firing on Cleveland – 3H 2L (E), DD-21 – 2L (E), Tennessee – 1H

American Fleet – Activate DD-31 and DD-32 – Firing on Jintsu – 4H 2L (E), DD-D – 2H 1DL 3L (E)





# January Monthly Meeting

## Game of the Month

Sponsored by Valhalla's Gaming Center



Each month CMH members host games at the monthly meeting. This award is for the effort put out by the host. The winning host receives a gift certificate from Valhalla's Gaming Center in Wheat Ridge, Colorado. We thank Valhalla's Gaming Center for its support.

CMH Member	Scale	Rules	Description
Eric Elder	N	Cold War Commander	Pusan Perimeter: Pusan Breakthrough
<b>MATT VIGIL</b>	15mm	Black Powder	ACW, Oak Grove
John Mumby	10mm	A Union So Tested	ACW
John Brown	15mm	DBM	Ancients, 2000 point armies

**Table 1 Game of the Month (WINNER)**

## CMH February Scheduled Events



This table shows what scheduled CMH events are coming up. Next months Friday Night Fights (FNF) and the monthly meeting (MM) are listed. It is recommended to schedule your game for future meetings and will appear on this page.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Start Time</b>	<b>End Time</b>
February 5	FNF	Baker	7:00 pm	midnight
February 7	MM	Baker	12:00 pm	5:00 pm
February 12	FNF	Valhallas	7:00 pm	midnight
February 19	FNF	Baker	7:00 pm	midnight
February 26	FNF	Valhallas	7:00 pm	midnight

# Colorado Military Historians, Inc.

Colorado Military Historians (CMH) is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to promote historical wargaming and the study of military history. Founded in 1965, CMH meets monthly on the second Sunday of the month, except in May when the meeting is deferred to the third Sunday. The meeting starts at noon at the Baker Recreation Center, 6751 Irving Street (just a few blocks west of Federal Blvd), Denver, Colorado. The club also hosts gaming every Friday night, called "Friday Night Fights" (FNF) at 7:00 p.m. The first and third Friday of the month, these meetings will be held at the Baker Community Center. The second and fourth Friday of the month, the meetings will be at Valhalla's Gaming Center, 6161 W. 44<sup>th</sup> Ave., Wheatridge, Colorado.



CMH maintains ties with numerous local, regional and national groups to help promote the hobby. CMH is governed by member-elected officers serving on the Board of Directors (executive board). Terms of office are one year, with elections held at the May meeting. New members are accepted after attending three CMH functions and a vote of the membership. Dues are \$50.00 per year, payable in January. Members wishing to receive a snail-mailed newsletter subscription must pay an additional fee of \$15.00 per year. Authors retain ownership of articles and graphics published. CMH reserves the right to edit or reject submissions to the newsletter.

One year Adult Membership: \$50.00  
Half year Adult Membership: \$25.00  
(for NEW members who join after June 30)  
Family Membership: \$50.00 (one Adult and any number of offspring)  
Student Membership: \$20.00 (16 to 22 years old)  
Children: free (younger than 16 accompanied by member)

## CMH Newsletter

The CMH Newsletter is a monthly newsletter published by the Colorado Military Historians. Views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of all CMH members.

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Next Issue: March 2010

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