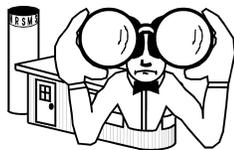


From The Bridge



Mystery Photo



I hope everyone enjoyed the 4th of July holiday. We had a neighborhood cookout to celebrate the 4th. It was nice getting together with my neighbors as I have not seen many of them lately. It seems they have been closed up in their homes trying to avoid the high heat that we had in June. It is hard to believe that summer is almost half over. I do not know where the time goes. I still have some outdoor projects that need to be finished, but have avoided them due to the high heat.

At the last meeting, I mentioned that Model Expo had a good sale going on. That sale has ended, but I recently received an email from them stating they have 33% off of the prices in their current Sale Catalog. If you need fittings, small tools or that long awaited kit, now is the time to purchase these items at a large savings. Just go to www.modelexpo-online.com and use offer code BANG10. This sale ends at midnight on July 23.

It was nice to see a show of hands of those members who will be attending the NRG Conference in Annapolis August 23rd thru August 29th. The Society will be well represented. Reservations can still be made at the Sheraton at the discounted rate by August 1st. After that date, the rooms will be at the regular rate. You can make your room reservations by calling toll free at 1-866-716-8115.

The Society now has its own laptop computer to help members prepare their presentations if they choose to use the audio-visual equipment that is available in the Mariners Museum meeting room. The software on the laptop includes a photo editing program and Microsoft Office 2007, which consists of Microsoft Word, Excel and Power Point. Tim Wood did an excellent job of finding this laptop computer which will handle all of our computing needs for many years to come.

I want to thank George Livingston and Tony Clayton for their presentation on building the Charles W. Morgan, a kit by Model Shipways. I know that we are all looking forward to seeing their future presentations on building this kit as they move forward with their builds.

I look forward to seeing everyone Saturday and do not forget to bring your current modeling project to share with the members.

Ryland

Mystery Photo #288: The reply began: "I had a blast figuring out this mystery photo." Although punctuated with a period instead of the expected exclamation point, it would be hard to argue that John Wyld didn't bracket this Mystery Photo with his opening salvo—fire for effect Mr. Wyld. If you got this month's Mystery Photo and you got it right, you should be well acquainted with what he means by "blast." Along with that cherry bomb John Wyld, Dave Baker, Ken McFetridge, and The Archival Bill Clarke sent in or called in a correct identification to this July 4th offering. Was it a hard Mystery to crack?

I like to categorize my Mystery Photos. Not by battleship, aircraft carrier, or destroyer, but by a more mundane system that rates these images as common, difficult, rare, and perhaps impossible. This one fits into my "rare" category. Rare, as in you have to have a bit of insider knowledge or have seen it before to know where to search for information. Rare, as in you have to be fairly creative in interpreting the clues to establish identification. And rare, meaning fairly obscure, tied up with some long forgotten operation or research project. Dave Baker seems to have gotten it immediately (of course he's seen and written about almost every ship, boat, craft, and variation thereof ever contemplated or built by the US Navy in the last 60-odd years—a superb resource to have by the way) while John, Ken and Bill had to fire some ranging shots to find their target in this rarified atmosphere.

There were several prime clues in this Mystery Photo. "[John Wyld] guessed right away the ship was from the BROOKLYN class in view of the long foredeck..." while Ken McFetridge said the "Stripped down Talos target designator on foredeck was the clue." Both men were on the right track and, as comedian Randy "tater salad" White says, "Close." The Wyld one soon learned this as "[he] went to Navsource (www.navsource.org) and began looking through the list of WWII CLs, further narrowing the search to units which were redesignated from CL to something (anything)

(Continued on page 2)

MEETING NOTICE

Date: Saturday June 12, 2010

Place: Mariners' Museum

Time: 1400 Hours

(Continued from page 1)



Mystery Photo

else. I seized (though not in the Bob Comet rigging sense) upon the listing for the CLEVELAND class USS ATLANTA CL-104, redesignated IX-304." McFetridge found the tables turned on him as I frustrated his reply of "USS Atlanta (CL-104)" by telling him he was "Close." After a few days he amended his reply by telling me that the vessel in MP#288 was USS Atlanta (IX-304). Recognizing the hull form and the array of American style radar antennas should have placed more of you on the right path to success.

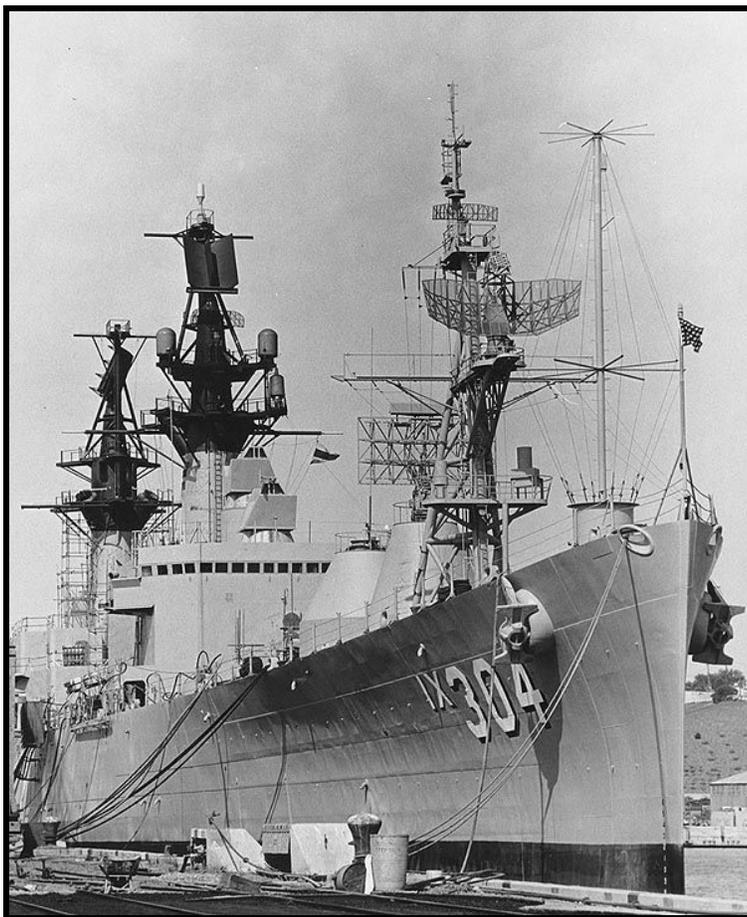
With the fuze now lit, Baker says "This month's mystery ship is the IX 304, ex-U.S.S. ATLANTA, CL 104. The ship was taken from reserve and converted into an explosive shock trials test platform in 1964 and eventually sunk as a target in 1970." Wlyd was just a bit wild with his amusing observation: "This is clearly the USS OBFUSCATION, CCU-1. This unit, the first of a class of fortunately no other units, was an attempt to design a cruiser completely by a committee of individuals with no Navy experience and who never met face to face. The idea at the time was to use this design as an opportunity for 'fresh ideas not hidebound to tradition'. Or, apparently, to logic as I might observe. The committee was never able to agree on which RADARs were the best choice for the vessel, and so they put as many different ones aboard as would fit the available real estate. One committee member felt two masts were inadequate, and so three were fitted. One thing the committee only noticed when construction was nearing completion was the lack of any weapons battery. This led to the hasty inclusion of the 'pepperbox' AS-ROC launcher just forward of the bridge. Since a RADAR was displaced to mount this launcher, a committee member resigned in protest. After all this flashed through my head in an astonishingly small amount of time, I got down to the real work of figuring out yet another incredibly ugly ship." Clarke, for his part, remains confused claiming not to know if the vessel is coming or going as he points out that each deck house faces its respective end of the ship. In the end all four players knew that Atlanta was modified to subject her hull, superstructure, and antennas to high energy weapons testing.

USS Atlanta (CL 104) was a member of the numerous US Navy Cleveland-class light cruisers. The 10,000-ton vessel was built by the New York Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company in Camden, New Jersey, and was commissioned in

NAUTICAL TERM

Capstan: The large Vertical-axis drum-head "engine" by which anchors were hoisted, and some sails and their yards, cargo, and heavy equipment were handled. Earlier there appeared to be several spellings, a common one being capstan. The origin appears to be Portuguese, cabestan, it being traceable to the Latin word capistrare, to fasten with rope.

Submitted By: Tim Wood



At the Hunters' Point Naval Shipyard, San Francisco, California, circa October 1964, while completing conversion to a weapons effects test ship. The original picture caption, released by 12th Naval District Office of Public Information, reads: "The various masts and antennas that will be subjected to the blast tests cover the forecastle of the *Atlanta*. This equipment is primarily the type used in the fleet today."

December 1944. According to her online history, "*Atlanta* first entered combat in late May [1945], serving as an escort to aircraft carriers raiding enemy targets in the Ryukyu Islands and on Kyushu. She had a similar role during strikes on the Japanese home islands in July and during the first half of August. Following the return of peace, the cruiser remained briefly in the western Pacific before returning to the U.S. for shipyard overhaul in October 1945. When that work was completed in early January 1946, *Atlanta* steamed back across the Pacific for a tour of duty in Far Eastern waters that lasted until June. She deployed again in May 1947 for a visit to Australia. That was followed in September 1947 by another Far Eastern cruise that ended in April 1948. *Atlanta* spent the rest of her active career operating along the U.S. West Coast. She decommissioned in July 1949 and, after over thirteen years in the Pacific Reserve Fleet, was stricken from the Naval vessel Register at the beginning of 1962. However, she was reinstated in May 1964, redesignated IX-304, and converted to a weapons effects test ship."

(Continued on page 3)



Mystery Photo

Her relatively short and uninteresting career which was typical for all late-war construction was punctuated by one gruesome anecdote. This oral history appears on an on-line web site, and I assume it happened after her 1945/1946 overhaul. I apologize, but the author's name escapes me. It seems that *Atlanta* was detailed to transport five Japanese prisoners of war, 2 Captains, 2 Lieutenants, and 1 Private, to Guam for war crimes trials. One of them, an army lieutenant "was executed on Guam in 1948, possibly the one who murdered and helped an Australian pilot who bailed out of his aircraft over Chichi Jima island. One of the Captains was supposed to be the Commander of Jap forces on Wake Island when recaptured. His crime was the brutal treatment given to the civilian workers who were retained on the island after its capture by the Japanese Army. We do not think we ever knew that these POWs were to be tried for war crimes. Their orders were sealed and SECRET. For more information on the crimes committed on Chichi Jima, read "FLYBOYS - A TRUE STORY OF COURAGE" by James Bradley."

This history leads us to the rather oddly configured vessel in our Mystery Photo. "I HATE ugly ships, so I will work with vigor until I find out who is responsible for this stain on naval architecture." Or so says John Wlyd in his continuing rant. He emphatically states that we have, again, produced an "UGLY BETTY!" And he continues: "More disheartening was the fact that CL-104 had been named for USS ATLANTA, CL-51, the lead ship of a class of cruisers which I find to be distinctly good looking warships. CL-51 was lost 13 November 1942 during the Naval Battle for Guadalcanal, and so never saw the mutant version of her name as seen in the MP. She was to be used as a weapons effects test ship. In other words, she was so ugly the Navy had no problem setting off large quantities of explosives increasingly close to her to see what the effects on her would be."

OK John, we get it.

The weapons trials that our respondents refer to was code named Operation Sailor Hat; as John says "presumably to reflect the squashed look the ship would have after the completing of the test." And from a web site: "In mid-May 1964 the stricken light cruiser *Atlanta* (CL-104) was reinstated on the Naval Vessel Register and redesignated IX-304. Taken to the Naval Shipyard at Hunter's Point, San Francisco, she was converted to a weapons effects test ship." Dave's reply differs in that he identifies the conversion site as "Mare Island Naval Shipyard." The test as John and Dave state "was conducted just off Kaho'olawe Island in the Hawaiian Islands, February through June, 1965." To which John adds, "The explosives were conventional, but meant to simulate the effects of nuclear weapons." To which Dave adds: "As can be seen from the photo, she was given new deckhouse and "mack" structures to test the effects of shock and blast on steel vs. aluminum deckhouse structures of the contemporary DLG classes and was also given a suite of modern electronics antennas for similar reasons; the tripod mast just forward of the forward conical base was an exact replica of that on a GEARING FRAM-I destroyer (the conical bases were intended to deflect blast effects so that the shock readings on the actual

equipment were as accurate as possible). As can also be seen in the photo, Ex-ATLANTA retained the ability to operate under her own power."

Dave's reply concludes with a fairly detailed summary of Atlanta's conversion taken "from a USN paper written on 9 October 1966 about the conversion:"

"On reactivation by Mare Island Naval Shipyard in 1964, the ship retained her two outboard shafts and two boilers (nos. 1 and 2) and a navigational bridge and charthouse were installed in the forward-facing, blast-hardened deckhouse. Some of the living spaces were reactivated for the project crew and civilian techs who were to be aboard under what was called "Operation Sailor Hat."

The new structures added to the stripped hull included a standard DLG 16 deckhouse facing aft and a blast-hardened one facing forward and incorporating the uptakes for the two boilers in its "mack." The structures cost some \$1.1 million dollars, while the Gearing-class mast added forward cost only \$60 thousand. Weapons systems added for the shock trials, at a cost of \$200 thousand included an ASROC launcher and loader crane, two sets of Mk 32 ASW torpedo tubes, one Mk 25 torpedo tube (to starboard), two AN/SPG-55 radar mockups; two AN/SPG-55 radar mockups with actual (non-operating) antennas, aft; and one AN-SPG-51 radar on a Mk 73 director.

Electronics equipment included an SPS-10B surface search radar (on the DD mast); an AN/SPS-42 air-search radar (may have been the only one; it didn't enter USN service); an AN/SPS-12B air-search radar (misidentified as SPS-21B in the memo), an AN/SPS-37 air search radar; and AN/SPS-40 air search radar (on the DD mast), and an AN-SPS-30 height finder. All these were operational sets, to my surprise, but she also got a number of dummy radars plus a non-operational SPS-10 set, while two direction finder sets and a few radio sets and intercept equipment were installed. The dummy radar antennas included two AN-SPS-39A height finders (one blast hardened).

I have a large aerial photo of IX-304 sinking after her hull had been snapped in two by a single torpedo in 1970; all of the antennas and even the ASROC launcher had been removed, but, oddly, there was an A-4 Skyhawk parked on deck on the starboard side just forward of the bridge area. The after superstructure appears to have been totally demolished by the torpedo strike, but the blast-hardened one survived intact, even to including the mack and topmast. Alas, all of our WW II cruisers would have suffered much the same fate from an under-hull torpedo detonation."

The web site offers a little more detail about the test itself:

"Bitter wartime experience has taught the Navy the need to subject ships, aircraft, weapons and equipment to conditions simulating the destructive forces of combat. Explosive tests to determine the survivability of warship structure and installations are frequently conducted, usually on obsolete ships that are not necessarily expected to survive the experience, but sometimes using modern units which have many years of active service ahead of them.

Among the most spectacular of these tests were three

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(Continued from page 3)



Mystery Photo

very powerful conventional explosions carried out at Kahoolawe Island, Hawaii, in 1965 as part of Project "Sailor Hat", intended to study the effects of shock and blast on warships built to contemporary design standards. The former light cruiser *Atlanta* (IX-304) was specially converted as a close-in target ship for this operation. Other modern ships were also assigned as targets, though they would be stationed more distantly from the explosions to ensure that any resulting damage could be readily repaired. Each of the "Sailor Hat" tests used a 500-ton charge of high explosive, stacked in hemispheric form on Kahoolawe's rocky shore.

In addition to *Atlanta*, the guided-missile destroyer *Cochrane* (DDG-21) and the Canadian Navy's escort destroyer *Fraser* were present for the first test, Shot "Bravo", which took place on 6 February 1965. All the ships had their crews on board for this spectacular blast, which resembled a small nuclear explosion in many ways. Afterwards the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard repaired the *Atlanta* and somewhat altered her radar antenna installations. On 16 April the second test, Shot "Charlie", was conducted with *Atlanta*, guided-missile frigate *England* (DLG-22), guided-missile destroyer *Benjamin Stoddert* (DDG-22) and HMCS *Fraser* nearby. The series concluded with Shot "Delta" on 19 June 1965. In addition to *Atlanta*, the guided missile frigate *Dale* (DLG-19) and guided missile destroyer *Towers* (DDG-9) were present on that occasion."

Light, effective, blast resistant structures dominated US Navy design and shipbuilding from the beginning of the electronic age to the near present. It was a revolutionary time for ship construction and warfare thinking. The conclusion of World War two initiated the Navy to a new class of weapon—the nuclear bomb with its enormous blast and electromagnetic signature. As the Navy made the switch from near horizon gunnery to near horizon missile defense, with its associated tall masts and heavy radar antennae, a new type of superstructure was called for. Operation Sailor Hat provided some of the empirical data necessary to push this new design thinking along. It is the irony of ironies that the Navy chose to convert their test platform from a class of vessels widely known to be



Detonation of the 500-ton TNT explosive charge for Shot "Bravo", first of a series of three test explosions on the southwestern tip of Kahoolawe Island, Hawaii, 6 February 1965. Weapons effects test ship *Atlanta* (IX-304) is moored in the left center. Note the shock wave spreading over the water just beyond the ship, and the shock condensation cloud lifting overhead.

top heavy. As Bill Clarke says, "It's a shame that the Navy didn't save an almost complete hull to test. Instead they chose to cut down a completed cruiser." Bill the answer to that thought lies back in Dave's remarks.

John Cheevers

I have a spelling checker
It came with my PC
It highlights for my review
Mistakes I cannot see.

I ran this poem thru it
I'm sure your pleased to no
Its letter perfect in it's weigh
My checker told me sew.

THE ANSWER

The answer to Mystery Photo 288:
USS *Atlanta* (IX-304, formerly CL-104), 1964-1970
Thanks to Tim Wood for the Photo.

Mystery Photo

Contact John Cheevers by mail, e-mail or
telephone if you know what it is.
jfcheevers@verizon.net



NOTABLE EVENTS

JULY

- 10 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation: "The Nemi Ships", Ron Lewis

AUGUST

- 14 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation: TBD

SEPTEMBER

- 11 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting, Picnic, NN Park
19 Talk Like a Pirate Day

OCTOBER

- 9 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation, Ryland Craze
16-17 IPMS Region 2 Model Contest, Fredericksburg, Va.

NOVEMBER

- 13 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation: Tony Clayton

DECEMBER

- 11 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation: John Cheevers

JANUARY

- 8 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Nomination of officers

FEBRUARY

- 12 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Election of officers

MARCH

- 12 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation: Bob Comet "building the Niagara - Part 2"

APRIL

- 9 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

WATCH, QUARTER AND STATION BILL
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Skipper: Ryland Craze (804) 739-8804
Mate: Tim Wood (757) 934-1450
Purser: Eric Harfst (757) 221-8181
Clerk: Tom Saunders (757) 850-0580
Historian: Len Wine (757) 566-8597
Editors: John Cheevers (757) 591-8955
Bill Clarke (757) 868-6809
Tom Saunders (757) 850-0580
Webmaster: Greg Harrington (757) 930-4615
Chaplain: Alan Frazer (757) 867-7666

MINUTES



Hampton Roads Ship Model Society
Monthly Meeting
Mariners' Museum
June 12, 2010

The Skipper, Ryland Craze, called the meeting to order at 1410 hours. The Skipper asked for corrections to the minutes. Several typographical errors were noted. The Clerk took his flogging and offered no remorse. The Purser, Eric Harfst, gave the financial report. The Skipper presented an audit of the financial records and distributed several copies. There was no Webmaster's report.

Old Business: There was discussion of open days at the Model Builders Booth at the Mariners' Museum. There was discussion of nametags and shirts. Ryland said the original artwork needs to be located. Tim Wood showed our newly procured computer and discussed the programs loaded on it.

New Business: Heinz Schiller polled the group, asking who was planning to attend the Nautical Research guild conference. There were several positive responses. Tim Wood asked if we need to appoint another historian. Ryland said that we need to contact Len Wine and this item needs to be held over until the next meeting. Bill Clarke said that John Cheevers has some of the membership certificates and he would like to revive the tradition giving membership certificates. Bill Clarke also talked about David Tagg's memorial service. Ron Lewis asked for a volunteer to build a plastic model of the *Titanic* for the museum Education Department.

Show & Tell: Bob Comet showed the progress of his model of the *Niagara*. Graham Horne asked why masts were raked. His question led to a discussion of purpose and style of raked masts. Ron Lewis showed his model of a skipjack and gave some details of his interior finish work. Tony Clayton showed pictures of his neighbor's 8 ft. model of the North Carolina. Henry Clapp showed a battery operated cauterizing scalpel he uses to trim the ends of lines. Henry also showed plans for and RC Footie sailboat.

The meeting was adjourned to a presentation by George Livingston and Tony Clayton on building their respective models of the *Charles W. Morgan*.