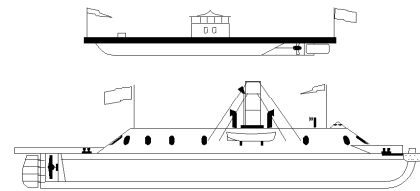


# Logbook



No. 205

JULY, 2003

## FROM THE PILOTHOUSE



I received an e-mail on Monday (June 23) indicating that the NRG Board of Directors is now down to five effective members. Dave Yotter was seriously injured in a mountain bike accident "a few months ago" that produced intra-cranial bleeding. He had emergency surgery this past Saturday (June 21) to try and correct the situation. He may be back home on the following Monday. Whether he can continue as a member of the board is open to question, but he is certainly out of the loop for the time being. I sent a get well card to Dave on behalf of the HRSMS.

Joe McCleary

## MINUTES



HRSMS Monthly Meeting  
June 13, 2003  
Host, Alan Frazer

Guest: Pat Macarthy 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting

A Purser's report was given.

There were no corrections to the minutes. Alan Frazer noted that a correction in the directions to the meeting is necessary, as there are now seven lights.

Old Business: The 2005 NRG Conference was discussed. The list of speakers was discussed.

New Business: Greg Harrington offered to revive the HRSMS Web Page. He was requested to look at rates for hosting and report at the next meeting. The Clerk stated that he had received a letter of resignation from Ed Saunders. There was discussion of a special rate for associate members to receive the Logbook. It was noted that the current Bylaws do not contain language pertaining to an associate membership. (After a review of the minutes, in October of 1998 the membership voted to establish a subscription rate for the Logbook of \$8.00 per year for non-members.) Dave Baker

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## Mystery Photo



Answer to Mystery Photo: This month's mystery photo does not document a vessel but reveals, for the first time, a secret ceremony previously known only to ship model builders. Known as Skibsercism, an ancient rite designed to drive out the procrastination that plagues model builders, it should only be performed once in a modeler's career and is said to ensure the successful completion of the ship model. The ritual, performed here by the current HRSMS Skipper, is usually given to novice modelers when they join the society. However, in this case, the ceremony was performed for senior club member Bill Clarke. This image is the only known photographic record of Skibsercism and captures "Sir" Joseph McCleary kneeling at the modeler's altar and reciting the sacred adjuration to a rhythmic pounding (notice the right hand about to strike the altar.)

No, wait! Forget what you just read. I think I have my images mixed up. This image, as the caption correctly states, has Joe McCleary demonstrating the making of gratings and window frames using a modeler's table saw. It's just that having an image of Joe on his knees before a room full of his peers is just too much to ignore! The correct Mystery Photo is at the top of page 3, in *Logbook* No. 204; and contains as many as four vessels.

I have it on good authority that the vessel we should focus on is the larger, awning-covered vessel in the background. But, since I am a fair man, I will make the same offer on this image that I have made of past Mysteries with multiple vessels: I will award points for the correct identification of any vessel in the image.

With the field now wide open, what does this month's image offer the modeler? Although the submitter hinted at four vessels, I see only three—a submarine, a tender of some sort, and a launch(?). What look like rafts placed just ahead and astern of the tender will not be counted and may be anchor bouys. At the distance the photographer made this image, defining sharp, clear individual ship's details will be difficult. Instead, we will rely on overall shape and general appearance to make our identification.

I'll begin with the submarine. She is the easiest vessel to spot and the ID number on her sail (is it 2 or 21?) all but gives her away. Don't bet on it. Prior to World War Two, the US Navy used a naming and numbering scheme similar to the Royal Navy's—letter class names and ID numbers, starting each class with the next letter in the alphabet and number one. For this discussion, I'll assume that this

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submarine belongs to the US Navy. She looks like an “S” boat but I wouldn’t rule out the “R’s” and the “O’s” just yet.

According to U.S. Warships of World War I, by Paul Silverstone, submarines identified as N-2, O-2, R-2, R-21, S-2, and S21 were built and had varying lengths of service beginning in the late teens. N-2, R-21, and S-2 were scrapped in the early 1930’s, while the rest lasted until scrapping in 1946. Since the “S-class is the most likely mystery submarine, we’ll concentrate on them.

“S” boats carried a distinctive sail arrangement; one where the conning space protrudes ahead of the lower structure forming a pulpit that slightly covers an ammunition scuttle. The sail’s lower fairing extends forward enclosing the scuttle. In all cases, these submarines carried their identification number on the sail, but again, while some carried it on the upper structure, the others placed it on the lower part—most examples show a white number on a black field for easier identification. This submarine carries the ID number on the raised, protruding structure. The fact that it’s so large and easily spotted would indicate the photograph was taken during peacetime. What should make the overall identification easy is the unusual shadowing near the bow. However, my photo library does not reveal an “S” boat with the raised forecastle we see here, even with all the differing bow treatments. This raised forecastle provides some sheer, and flares out slightly at the deck. It looks exaggerated because the sun’s angle is elongating the shadows near the bow. (We see similar shadowing on the rear vessel’s vertical sided hull plating.) This bow is more reminiscent of the British bow on WWII submarines. Finally, I cannot tell whether we see laundry drying on the deck or men in dress whites assembled for leave.

If we assume the visible ID number is a “2,” we most likely see the S-class boat, S-2. The previously mentioned O-2 and R-2 had smaller sails, and are no longer under consideration. Jane’s Fighting Ships, 1931, notes that S-2 was not a successful design. Nevertheless, she spent the bulk of her career in the western Pacific. She was decommissioned in 1929 and scrapped in 1931; again, are we looking at a pre-war image? The DANFS listing for S-2 states she visited Guam during her return voyage to the United States sometime in the summer of 1929. A check of S-21’s service record (DANFS) reveals she was not in the Pacific during this time, but was lent to the British in 1942. With the odd shaped bow, could this be her? Did the British modify any leased submarine for their service?

Next, we look at the launch. We have just a glimpse of the square transom of this canvas-awning covered boat as she completes a 180-degree turn away from the anchored sub and tender. A casual glance almost makes her look like a full rigged ship sailing away. But a closer look reveals what may be a smoke pipe extending through the forward awning. Standard US Navy steam powered launches were fitted with this arrangement of awnings and smoke pipes; but most were phased out by the middle 30’s, being replaced with similar hulls fitted with small gas or diesel engines. Like the S-2, could this fact also drive our time frame to the 1920’s?

The tender is most unusual. A quick glimpse makes

her look like a lake boat. Many of the early Great Lake ore carriers carried a circular house on their forecastle like this vessel. Overall she is a small vessel, barely larger than the submarine beside her. (The S-boats under review average about 211-feet at the waterline making this vessel no longer than about 300-feet.) There is no indication of a waist or well deck; the sheer strake runs unbroken from bow to stern and the sheer line is repeated in the edge of the enormous awning. Her engine and machinery are fitted aft. A single stack raises just behind a rather small, but contemporary, pilot house. The bow shows no flare in the frames; the slab side reveals a large rubbing strake. A breakwater extends from the circular deckhouse to the side. There is no sign of armament or advanced electronics. With just a whiff of smoke coming from the stack, the power plant is in standby, with only ship service (auxiliary) power, for pumps and hotel needs, being supplied.

Not knowing any more than I’ve written, my best guess is we have either a refueling operation or the submarine is taking on potable water at some Pacific Island base in the late 1920’s or early 1930’s. The sand bars in the distance are undoubtedly part of a lagoon anchorage—probably Guam. The large ID number on the submarine and lack of protective weapons on the tender would indicate a peacetime operation. It is possible that the launch is ferrying men ashore for R and R.

At this point I have exhausted my resources to identify these vessels and no enterprising player has come forward with a silver bullet/magic pill. Apparently, in anticipation of this, Dave Baker has elected to supply the following narrative:

“It’s a bit late for use in the latest Newsletter, but the intended mystery ship was the oiler behind the S-class submarine. In the event that John Cheevers can’t provide the identification, here’s a bit of information about the ship for next month’s newsletter: The ROBERT L. BARNES (AG 27, ex-AO 14, ex-AK 11, ex-SP-3088) was ordered for the Robert Barnes Steam Ship Co. from the McDougall Duluth Ship Building Co., Duluth, Minn., for Great Lakes service. The ship was launched during 1917, but prior to delivery to the owner, she was purchased for \$545,000 by the U.S. Shipping Board on 29 June 1918 and given the identification number SP-3088. Retaining her intended civilian name, the ROBERT L. BARNES was transferred to the Navy on the same date and was commissioned on 19 October 1918. In 1919, the ship was assigned to the Naval Overseas Transportation Service and departed Norfolk, Va., for San Pedro, Cal., on 21 November 1919. Sent to Hawaii with a cargo of fuel oil, the ship departed from Pearl Harbor for Guam on 8 April 1920 and essentially spent the rest of her career at Guam as station tanker and oil fuel storage vessel. Initially (and inexplicably) assigned hull number AK 11 (indicating “Cargo Ship” and meaning DRY cargo ship) in July 1921, by 1922 she had been redesignated as AO 14, and on 7 January 1938 she was retyped again, as general auxiliary AG 27. The DANFS entry for the ship makes no mention of any of the hull number assignments, by the way.

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Aside from being towed to Cavite Naval Station for annual refits in 1920 through 1923, and again in 1930 and 1934, the ROBERT L. BARNES swung at her moorings in April Harbor, where she was strafed and bombed--but not seriously damaged--by Japanese forces on 8 December 1941 and captured on 10 December. The ROBERT L. BARNES was stricken from the U.S. Navy Vessel Registry on 21 July 1942 but was in fact put into service by the Japanese at Guam and recovered more or less intact in 1945. That year, she was sold to British commercial interests and operated from 1945 to 1949, first as the FORTUNE and later as the M.T.S. No.2. The ship was scrapped in 1950.

The ROBERT L. BARNES was 258-ft. 6-in. overall (251-ft. 10-in. between perpendiculars) by 43-ft. 2-in beam and drew 18 ft. 6 inches at a full-load displacement of 5,380 tons. By 1938, however, she was listed as displacing only 3,850 tons full load on 15-ft of draft, as evidently some of the cargo tanks were no longer used. Initially, she was rated as being able to carry 3,000 tons of oil fuel cargo, but by 1938 that had been reduced to 1,900 tons.

As AO 14, the BARNES rated a crew of 3 officers, 1 CPO, and 51 enlisted, but as AG 27, her crew was no officers, 3 CPO, and 56 enlisted; either way, it must have been rather crowded. The BARNES had a single propeller, driven by one vertical triple expansion steam engine with cylinders of 18, 30, and 50-in. diameter and 42-in. stroke; it produced an estimated 1,100 indicated horsepower ("estimated," because the ship never did run trials) and gave her a maximum speed of 8.5 kts. That low speed, and her own meager bunkering of only 165 tons of fuel probably accounts for her being towed to the Philippines and back for overhauls.

There were two Scotch boilers with a total of 2,380 sq.ft. of heating service, and she had two 125-volt generator

sets, one of 30 kw and one of 15 kw.

The Mystery Photo is the only one I've ever seen of the ROBERT L. BARNES, and she probably deserves her historic obscurity. But at least I now know what filled the gap between AO 13 and AO 15. In later years, a ship of this size would have been rated as a YO--Yard Oiler, and the BARNES' general immobility certainly made her more of a service craft than a seagoing asset.

Anyway, if Cheevers is stumped, he may want this earthshaking information too!" Very best regards/Dave

Yes, Cheevers was stumped; but he was sooo close! Hope you enjoyed this round of Mystery Photo.

John Cheevers

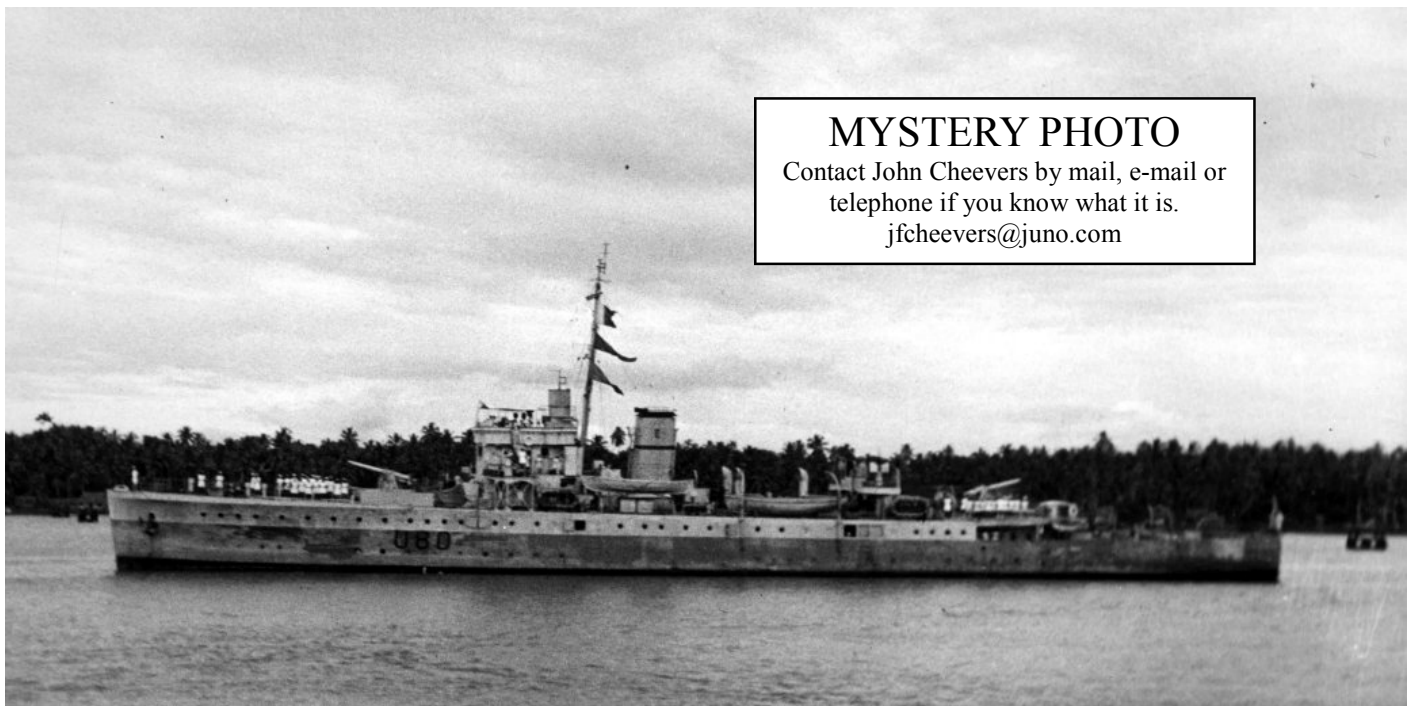


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was asked to be the point of contact for an auction to be held at the December meeting.

Show & Tell: Bob Comet gave an excellent review of the American Armoured Foundation's Tank Museum in Danville Virginia. Alan Frazer gave a report on the Sampson Naval Training Center Museum and the book Photo Etching for Modelers by Bryan King. Dave Baker showed a copy of Fine Scale Modeler. Greg Harrington showed a copy of his masters thesis. Dean Sword showed a book on the Liberty Ship *John Brown*.

The meeting was adjourned to a presentation "Lofting" by Jack Bobbitt.



**MYSTERY PHOTO**  
Contact John Cheevers by mail, e-mail or telephone if you know what it is.  
jfcheevers@juno.com

## NOTABLE EVENTS

### JULY

- 11 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: McCleary, Wine Presentation, CAD for Ship Modeling, Len Wine

### AUGUST

- 8 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host Eric Harfst

### SEPTEMBER

- 6 Mid-Atlantic Maritime Festival  
 6 2003 Sship Model Regatta & Display  
 Independence Seaport Museum, Philidelphia, Pa.  
 12 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, John Cheevers  
 20 Festival in the Park, Mariners' Museum  
 27 Scientific & Navigational Instrument Exhibition  
 Opening, Mariners' Museum

### OCTOBER

- 10 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Greg Harrington  
 17-21 NRG Conference,

### NOVEMBER

- 14 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host; Heinz Schiller

### DECEMBER

- 12 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Jack Bobbitt

### JANUARY

- 9 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host: Bob Comet

### FEBRUARY

- 13 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Dave Baker  
 Election of Officers

### MARCH

- 12 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Bob Krumpen

### APRIL

- 9 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Southside Bunch

### MAY

- 14 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Bill Clarke

### JUNE

- 11 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting:

**WATCH, QUARTER  
 AND  
 STATION BILL**



Skipper: Joe McCleary (757) 253-1802  
 Mate: Dave Baker (757) 565-7991  
 Purser: John Cheevers (757) 591-8955  
 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

## Next Meeting

Date: July 11, 2003

Place: Synerject, LLC, 201 Enterprise Dr., Newport News, VA 23603

Time: 2000 Hours

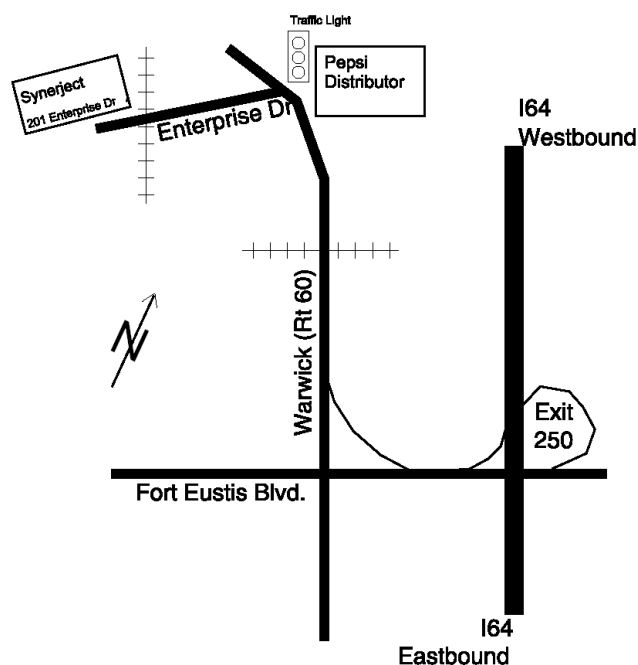
Host: Len Wine & Joe McCleary

From Richmond

**Take I-64 EAST 55.3 9.** Take the **VA-143/YORKTOWN (VA-238)** exit towards **LEE HALL**, exit #**247 0.3**, Turn Left on **MERRIMAC TRL 0.1 11.** Continue on **JEFFERSON AVE 1.1** Bear Right on **YORKTOWN RD 1.1**, Continue on **WARWICK BLVD 0.8**, Turn Right on **ENTERPRISE DR 0.7**

From Norfolk

Take **I-64 WEST 27.7**, Take the **FT EUSTIS BLVD/VA-105 WEST** exit towards **FT EUSTIS**, exit #**250A 0.2**, Bear Right on **FORT EUSTIS BLVD 0.7**, Continue towards **US-60 WEST/OAKLAND PLANTATION INDUSTRIAL PARK 0.3**, Continue on **WARWICK BLVD 0.6**, Turn Left on **ENTERPRISE DR 0.7**



## Thanks

The members would like to thank Alan Frazer and his wife Jane for hosting the June meeting.