

FROM THE PILOTHOUSE



D'YOU HEAR THERE FORE AND AFT!

Many thanks to Ellen and John Cheevers for hosting the September meeting of the HRSMS in their home. It was a great meeting and the Cheevers treated us royally, as they always do. John also put on a great program showing us his particular techniques for shaping solid hulls. His jig for cutting in both the shear line and the camber of the main deck with a router was absolutely brilliant. John already contributes much to the society by faithfully authoring the Mystery Photo column each month. If there are any members who would like to be a guest author of this column on occasion, I am sure that John would be happy to share the load. I should also like to thank those members who regularly contribute their analyses to this column. Now all we have to do is convince John to put his hull construction presentation down on paper so that it can be published in the Logbook for the benefit of those members who could not make it to the meeting.

Bob Comet continues to manage our schedule of programs very well. In October the presentation will be on building Plexiglas display cases. The schedule of future programs can be found on the back page under "Notable Events". If anyone has a suggestion for a future program on a subject about which they would like to know more, please contact Bob and get that subject on the calendar. With any luck, Bob can probably coax someone into speaking on that topic. After a career in the Navy, he is an expert at encouraging the reluctant.

If any member happens to stumble on information that could be interesting or useful to members of the HRSMS, make sure that it gets forwarded to Tom Saunders, our editor, so that it can be included in the Logbook. Tom is always happy to receive such input. Such information does not have to be specifically about ship model building. Our members are interested in a wide variety of information.

For those who do not already know, Bill Clarke's mother underwent an unscheduled operation on the day after our last meeting to correct a problem with diverticulitis. She came through the operation with flying colors and is now well on the way to recovery. I am sure that we all wish her well. A "Get Well" card has been sent on behalf of the HRSMS.

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Mystery Photo



Answer to Mystery Photo No. 207: If there were ever a more difficult set of circumstances surrounding a Mystery Photo, they would be hard to imagine. What developed this month was very interesting, humorous in a sense, controversial, and at times a little scary. We faced a hurricane, a long power outage, an untimely publication, intermittent computer problems, and political incorrectness. Let me set the stage for you.

Several months ago, Bill began crowing about an excellent photo he found in the National Archives, depicting a vessel so rare that it would be hard for this group to identify. In fact, since it appeared to be filed incorrectly or, at least, inadvertently placed in the file, he was very confident that we would not solve this mystery. I, of course, waited patiently for the editor to print this exciting find and to see what excellent responses it would generate.

Well, this month we finally see it— a handsome vessel sitting stately in the stream proudly wearing the U.S. measure-32 camouflage! Bill was so excited that he called as soon as the *Logbook* arrived asking if I identified the vessel. Even more, he wanted to know where the photo was taken. I gave him the location right away and will share that with you later; identifying the vessel, I told him, would take a little longer.

As luck would have it, Bill's carefully laid plan went awry the next day when I checked my mail. The U.S. Postal Service delivered Warship International, Vol. No. 39, No. 2, and on page 184, top, was our Mystery Photo! The search was essentially over before it began.

I like this vessel; it has an attractive layout and makes efficient use of space. It superficially resembles the U.S. Benson-Livermore class destroyer, but there's no hiding that French bow and those French stack caps. Look closer and you see that this vessel is smaller than a standard destroyer— more likely it is a corvette or a sloop. Finding her in the ship reference books should be a snap, especially with the identification "A1" prominently displayed on the hull.

The paint scheme almost certainly dates this image to the World War Two time frame. The joggled, lapped shell seams date the vessel to before the war, and place its origin in Europe. The water tower visible in the distance just forward of the bow gives the location—Norfolk, Virginia. So you have to ask, "what circumstance places a pre-war, foreign built warship wearing this paint scheme in U.S. waters?" Joe McCleary provided the answer along with an amazing

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Many thanks to Len Wine and John Cheevers who took it upon themselves to contact various members of our society immediately after the departure of the hurricane to insure that everyone was OK. Well done shipmates. We had a few members who had their houses damaged, but fortunately no one was injured.

Do not forget the auction in December. Keep pawing through your tool boxes and cabinets to find things that you do not need anymore and can donate to the cause. If I have to, I will contact your wives, and I will bet that they can find things of yours to get rid of.

That is all, Joe McCleary



revelation! (It's important to note that his response arrived via e-mail on the 17th, the day before Isabel!)

Joe begins his response this way, and he assures me he cleared it with Helen: "At first I thought it was a River Class or a Black Swan class RN frigate, but a check of a WW II era Jane's proved that I was wrong. It definitely is not a USN vessel, nor Japanese, nor German, nor Soviet; it just does not have that look (American, Japanese, and German destroyers have flat sterns just like the local women). So I decided to check out French and Italian possibilities before moving on to South America (French, and Italian destroyers tend to have rounded sterns just as with their women).

Before I go any further, I think we should all thank Joe for angering the gods and bringing the wrath of Isabel upon us!

Joe's response continues: "I decided to check the pre-WW II era because of the lack of electronics. Bingo, because "F" comes before "I", I struck pay dirt immediately with the *Bougainville* class of eight French sloops, also known as the "Avisos Coloniaux" class. The French Navy did not use dazzle camouflage paint schemes until early 1943, when the Free French joined the allies and they adopted that paint scheme in order to look more like RN ships and avoid mistaken identities."

Joe lists the vessel's characteristics as this: "This class had a displacement of about 2000 tons, with a length of 340 ft, a breadth of 41 ft 8 in, and a draft of 14 ft 9 in. Their complement was 136, but this was raised by about 50 during the war. The armament was three 5.5 in. main guns, and four 37 mm AA guns, plus four to six machine guns. Propulsion was supplied by two diesel engines (mainly Busch Sulzers) developing 3,200 SHP for 156.5 kts."

Joe explains the origin of the identification number, names our Mystery vessel, and gives a bit of the class history this way: "Originally this class, which was started in 1931, had two masts and pennant numbers up in the 60's. But by the end of the war half of the class had been sunk (one, the *Bougainville*, sank a class sister in 1940 off Libreville when the Free French were still fighting the Vichy French. *Bougainville* was then sunk in Libreville harbor by bombs in

MINUTES



HRSMS Monthly Meeting
September 14, 2003
Host: John Cheevers

The Skipper called the meeting to order at 2000 hours.

A purser's report was given.

Old Business: There was a second read of proposed amendments to the HRSMS Bylaws and Constitution. The amendments as published in the September logbook were passed by those in attendance. Greg Harrington was thanked for his efforts in placing the HRSMS web site on line. Dave Baker asked that nametags with the name of the donor be affixed to all items to be auctioned. The meeting was paused to recognize Alan Frazer for breaking Graham Horne's record for tardiness.

New Business: The Skipper encouraged members to send articles to the Logbook editor and asked presenters to give an outline of their presentations for inclusion in the Logbook. There was an open discussion of the NRG Journal.

Show & Tell: Dave Baker had a copy of Naval History Magazine, free to a good home. John Cheevers talked about the Keel Authentication Ceremony for the George Bush. The Shipyard Bulletin contained a picture of John and his sidekick Bill Clarke. There was an open discussion on the election of an NRG Director. Joe McCleary showed a catalog from Cornell Press. He announced that the Cabin Fever, the model engineering exposition, will be held on January 17 & 18, 2004 in Harrisburg Pennsylvania at the York Fairgrounds.

The meeting was adjourned to a presentation on solid hull construction by John Cheevers.

November 1940.) By the end of the war severe losses in French ships required a reordering of pennant numbers and the remaining *Bougainvilles* were given pennant numbers A-1 through A-4. A-1 was *La Grandiere*, which was built in Port de Bouc, just east of Marseilles. She was launched in 1939 and commissioned the next year. *La Grandiere* survived the war and was scrapped in November 1959."

So, Joe found our Mystery Vessel and lists an interesting resource that has ties with one of our club members—Les Flottes de Combat, 1947. Joe adds: "I would guess that the photo was taken in the 1943-45 time frame as the class reverted to a solid paint scheme after the war. [A photo in the book,] shows a portside view of this ship. It shows others in the remainder of the class, and indicates that the same dazzle pattern was used for the whole class."

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RESEARCH NOTE

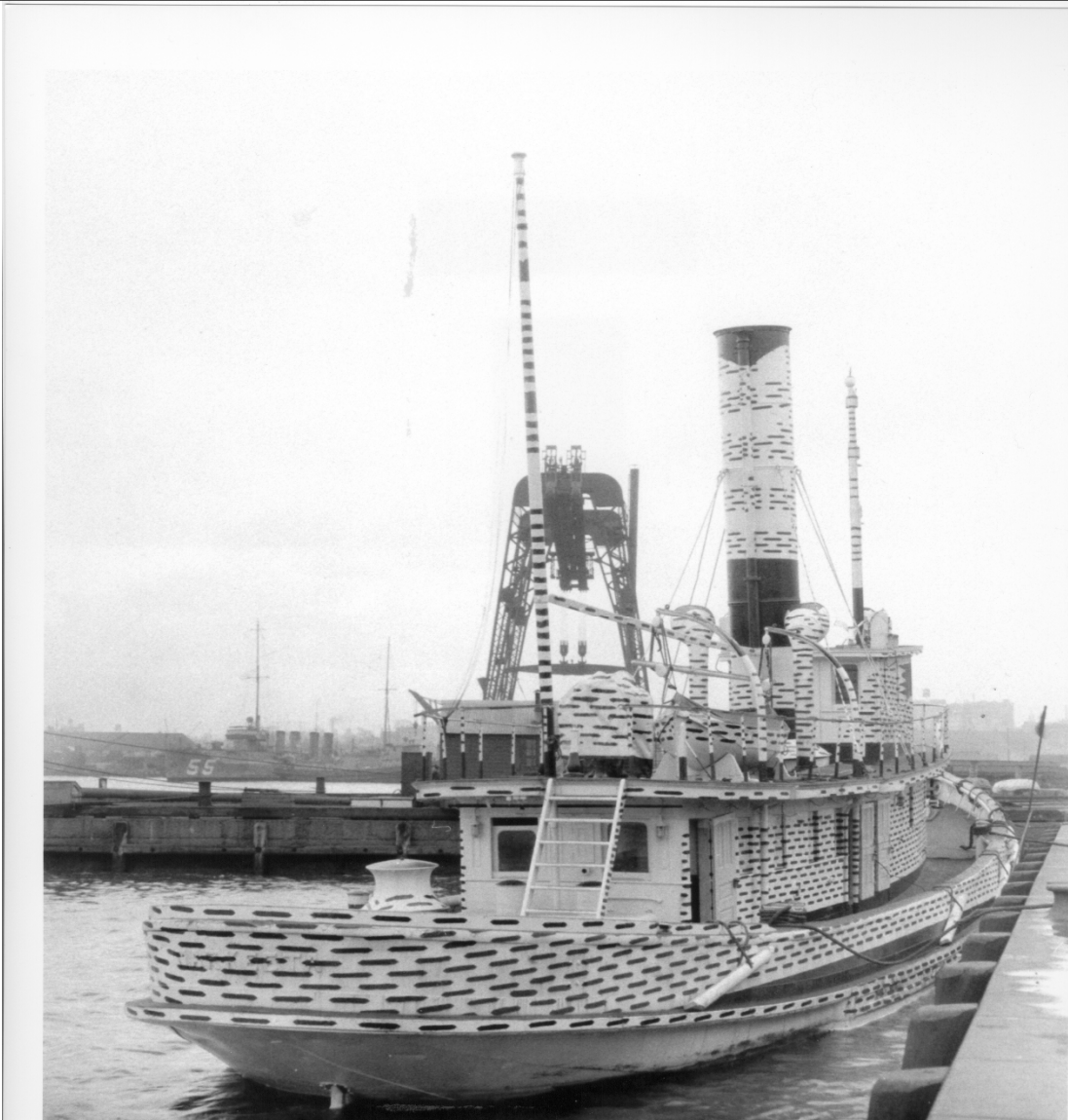
(Continued from page 2)

For Joe, solving the mystery was relatively easy. It was even easier for me. As I already said Warship International dropped the very same photo into my lap before I even began to play. The accompanying photo caption is somewhat less informative than Joe's excellent reply, but it does manage to clarify a few points. This image comes from the photo collection of the National Archives. While the author fails to provide the image's file number and record group, he is diligent enough to give the date—24 April 1944.

There you have it.

John Cheevers

Some telephone numbers at the National Archives have changed. The number for the ships plans section at Archives II in College Park, MD is now, 301-837-0868. The general information number is now, 301-837-1712. At the downtown Archives, on Pennsylvania Ave., the general information number is, 202-501-5000. The number for the Naval and Military Research section is unchanged, and is, 202-501-5390, but it now has a voice mail system to direct you to the proper area.



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

NOTABLE EVENTS

OCTOBER

- 10 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Greg Harrington
Making Plexiglas Display Cases, Joe McCleary
- 17-21 NRG Conference,

NOVEMBER

- 14 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host; Heinz Schiller
Cast Resin Models, Dave Baker

DECEMBER

- 12 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Jack Bobbitt
Auction, Dave Baker, Coordinator and auctioneer

JANUARY

- 9 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host: Bob Comet
Tips on Rigging and Block Rounding machine, Jack Bobbitt

FEBRUARY

- 13 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Dave Baker
Election of Officers
- How to make art work and other tips on ordering brass etchings, John Cheevers
- 29 Cabin Boy's Birthday

MARCH

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

APRIL

- 9 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Southside Bunch
30-May 2 Western Ship Model Conference

MAY

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

JUNE

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

JULY

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

AUGUST

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

SEPTEMBER

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

The Answer

The caption on Mystery Photo 207
PG – FF3
STBD. Bow
Norfolk Navy Yard
Photo Serial 7469(44) April 24, 1944

Thanks

The members would like to thank John Cheevers and his wife, Ellen for hosting the September meeting.

Next Meeting

Date: October 4, 2002

Place: 2713 Magruder Blvd Hampton, Virginia

Time: 2000 Hours

Host: Greg Harrington

Form Richmond

1: Merge onto I-64 E. 70.58 miles

2: Take the HAMPTON RDS CENTER PKWY EAST exit-exit number 261B. 0.40 miles

3: Stay straight to go onto HAMPTON ROADS CENTER PKWY. 0.75 miles

4: Take the VA-134/MAGRUDER BLVD ramp. 0.16 miles

5: Keep LEFT at the fork in the ramp. 0.08 miles

6: Merge onto VA-134 N. 0.21 miles

7: Turn LEFT onto BUTLER FARM RD. 0.01 miles

8: Turn LEFT onto VA-134 S. 0.12 miles

From Norfolk

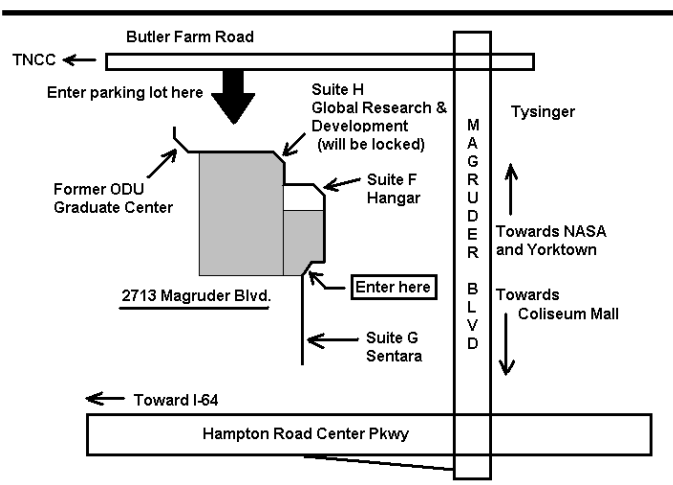
1: Merge onto I-64 W. 15.30 miles

2: Take the VA-134 N/MAGRUDER BLVD exit- exit number 262B- towards NASA/POQUOSON. 0.25 miles

3: Stay straight to go onto VA-134 N/MAGRUDER BLVD. 0.81 miles

4: Turn LEFT onto BUTLER FARM RD. 0.01 miles

5: Turn LEFT onto VA-134 S. 0.12 miles



WATCH, QUARTER AND STATION BILL



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