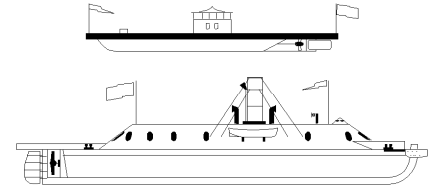


Hampton Roads Ship Model Society

Logbook



No. 220

WWW.HRSMS.ORG

OCTOBER, 2004

FROM THE PILOTHOUSE



Mystery Photo



The Boss is out of town.

OK; make yourself comfortable, dim the lights, cue the theme from X-files, and welcome to Mystery Photo #219. Are you ready? Good! This month the Mystery Photo 'goes farther' than just solving for the vessel name and history. The offering may just span the reaches of the normal into the paranormal or, perhaps, the Para physical. The story behind this vessel just might be the ultimate mystery wrapped within a mystery. The question is, do you believe?

There was a time some sixty-odd years ago when the America constructed a lightweight version of the classic destroyer to support the Allied Countries efforts to fight and win a global war against evil. Equipped with about two-thirds of everything carried by a real destroyer, these hard fighting ships were known as destroyer escorts. The United States contracted to build over 1000 examples of the type but only 610 were completed. (Hull numbers ranged from #1 to #1005.) Many completed examples were never commissioned into the US Navy going, instead, to Great Britain under a lend-lease agreement.

(Continued on page 2)

MINUTES



HRSMS Monthly meeting
September 10, 2000
Host Dean Sword

Guests: Charles Landrum 2nd
Steve Rowe, 3rd

The meeting was called to order by the Skipper at 2000 hours.

(Continued on page 2)



HRSMS PICNIC

Newport News City Park

Saturday, October 30, 2004, 1130 to 1630 Hours

EVENT COORDINATOR: Bob Comet, Tel: 757 934 1279, Email Rcomet316@msn.com

(Minutes—Continued from page 1)

The first order of business was to recognize the guests. Steve Rowe was asked if he wanted to join the HRSMS. After an affirmative reply, he and Mr. Landrum were asked to leave the room while the members went through the ritual. Upon returning, Steve was welcomed as a new member.

Bob Comet noted that the dates for several of the upcoming meeting were no correct. He also noted several omissions in the show and tell portion of the minutes.

A Purser's report was given.

A Webmaster's report was given. Greg Harrington gave the status of Mystery Photo additions.

Old Business: Dave Baker reported that there is a problem with conference favors being completed in a timely manner. (The rest of the discussion on this matter is embargoed.) Bob Comet reported that the renovation of the Crabtree Collection would be completed by Labor Day 2005. His remark initiated a discussion of the Mariners' Museum and concerns about the direction the Museum is taking. Joe announced that he would serve as chairman of the Ladies Committee for the 2005 NRG Conference. Joe also said the ownership issue for an item we intend to use for the NRG Conference has been resolved favorably.

New Business: Alan Frazer asked who would like to display models at the Classic Boat Show to be held at the Mariners' Museum on October 16 – 17, 2005. Several members expressed an interest. Joe asked that we postpone the presentation scheduled for the December meeting in lieu of holding an auction. The membership concurred. Nimble-Tongue Dave Baker will again serve as auctioneer. Greg Harrington reported there will be a Vintage Traditional Watercraft Regatta at the Mariners' Museum September 16 – 20. Someone?? showed an article on the Elite Fleet published in the Virginian Pilot and someone?? Reported the Monitor folks at the museum want a model of said vessel. No information was on the requirements was available. Bob Comet said that he received a call from Graham Horne and he would be attending the picnic.

Show & Tell: Tim Wood noted the *Pride Of Baltimore* would be in Norfolk on October 16 – 17. Charles Landrum said that he has digital pictures of the K-77 a *Juliett-class* submarine. Bob Comet described how he uses "freezer paper" as a backing for cloth when sewing sails. John Cheevers showed ship plans he acquired and talked about the red bottom paint he used on his tugboat models. Greg Harrington showed his mini-lathe and asked for advice on disassembly for restoration.

The meeting was adjourned to a presentation, "Making Tapered Spars" by, Bob Comet.



(Mystery Photo—Continued from page 1)

Being an old softy, if I had to choose an identity for our mystery vessel, I would pick *USS Canfield (DE-262)*, knowing full well that she is not our vessel. I choose it for one reason: When I was wee lad, growing up in Northern Kentucky, the father of my best friend served aboard *Canfield* as the helmsman. Apparently people from the hill country make great seamen as a lot of the my friend's fathers, including my father and two of my uncles had all served in the navy during WWII. Jeff's dad was the only one to serve aboard a destroyer escort.

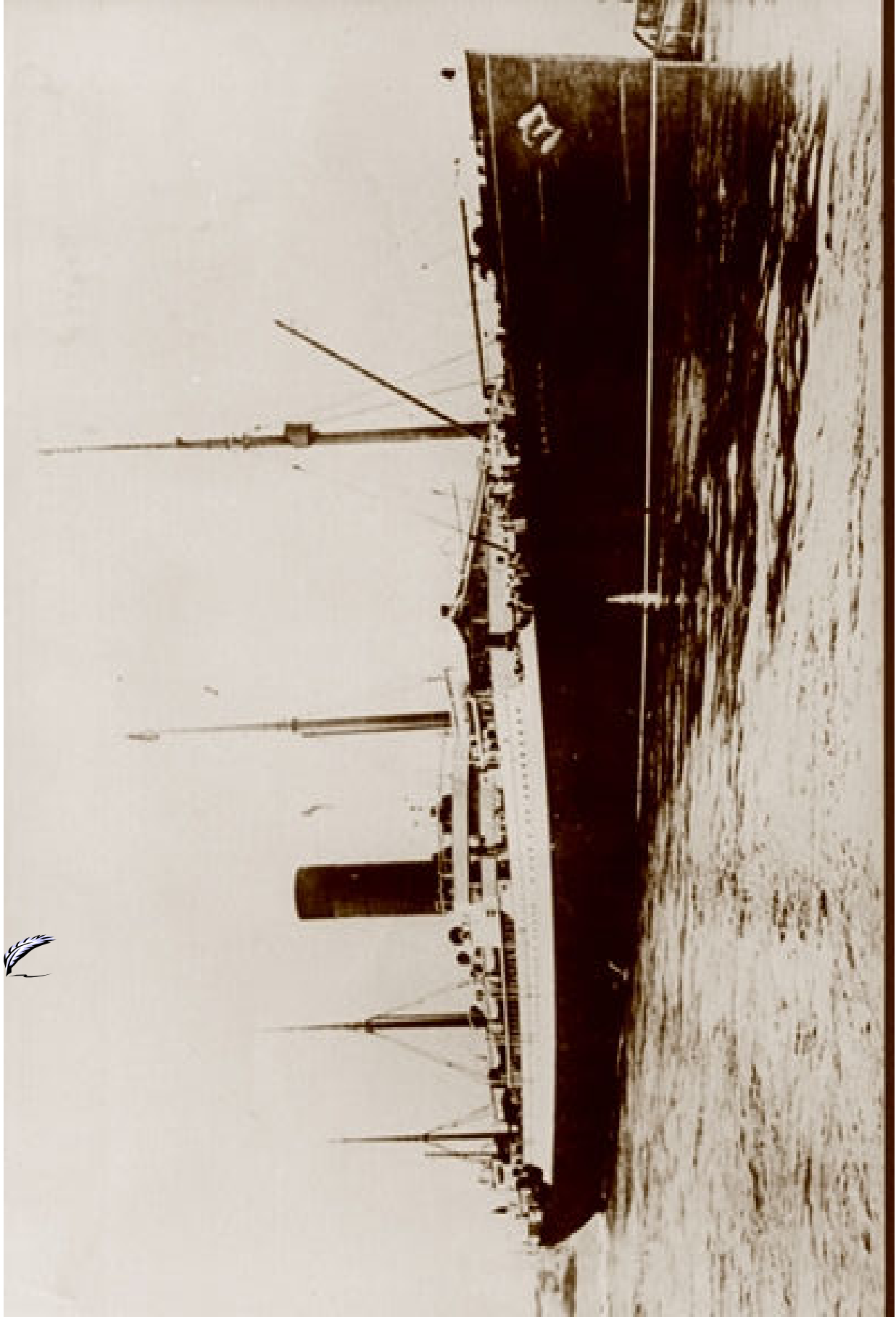
I remember being over at his house one evening and we watched a Special on TV about the Pacific War against Japan. I remember the documentary was routine until a DE slowly sailed across the TV screen and my friend's father sat up and said, "I remember this. That's my ship and I was at the wheel." Suddenly, the mood in the room changed as his memories of the war came back to him and he told stories that enthralled two young boys. So, even though I know my choice is wrong, I choose it for sentimental reasons.

But, I digress! We have a mystery to unwrap.

There was an initial flurry of responses (2) and then nothing. Earning top honors for speed this month, new member Steve Rowe, picked an obvious choice by following

(Continued on page 4)





Mystery Photo

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

(Mystery Photo—Continued from page 2)

the hull number printed so visibly (and, I understand, purposely left so by the editor) on the ship's side. Here is what he has to say: "I am not at all sure of this one, but I think the photo is the USS Chase (DE-158/APD-54) in her incarnation as a Charles Lawrence class high speed transport. The photo is quite similar to several online pictures of the Chase, as well as several other Buckley class destroyer escorts. However, I could not find any photos from the starboard bow aspect, or in the APD configuration." (Not to worry Steve, I dug out a bow aspect shot of USS Laning APD-55. Notice how the waist area is plated in to provide troop accommodations? That plus the heavy boat davit alters the classes profile enough to dismiss Chase as our mystery vessel.) He goes on to ask if he is right. Read on for the answer.

Following close on Steve's heels, Dave Baker responded with his usual complete, concise, and richly anecdotal response that details his pick. "The Royal Greek Navy Cannon-class frigate/destroyer escort *Leon* ('Lion')..." is how Dave's letter begins. (Note: This vessel should not be confused with the Ferrell Poquoson Navy destroyer escort *FD Leon*.) He continues: "The ship is one of four U.S. Navy Cannon-class destroyer escorts transferred to Greece in 1951 under the Mutual Defense Assistance Program (MDAP). The *Eldridge* (DE-173) was transferred on 15 January 1951, having been in reserve since decommissioning on 17 June 1945." Dave completes our look into this foreign service destroyer by indicating that "*Leon* was retired during 1992; her sister *Aetos* (the former U.S.S. SLATER, DE-766) is now a museum ship at Albany, New York. Although the painted-on pennant number was "54" during her Greek service, it actually stood for D 54, with the four DEs considered by the Greeks to be "destroyers." Greece was a longtime holdout to the NATO standard pennant number system."

Dave's choice seems reasonable enough and a quick check at the Haze-Gray website confirms it. Searching for images of *Eldridge* reveals our mystery photo credited like this: "Photo credit: *HNS Leon* (D-54), 1960's Tony Vrailas NavSource online."

As Dave so thoughtfully provided a very complete history of *Leon* while serving as *USS Eldridge* in the US Navy, I'll share it with you as he wrote it:

"The *Eldridge* was named for LCDR John Eldridge, Jr., USNA class of 1927, who was killed in action on 2 November 1942; as commanding officer of Scouting Squadron 71, operating from *U.S.S. Wasp* (CV-7), he had been awarded the Navy Cross for actions on 7 and 8 August 1942 during the initial stages of the Solomons campaign. His wife sponsored the ship.

The *Eldridge* was built by Federal Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Co., at their Port Newark, New Jersey, yard. Laid down on 22 February 1943, she was launched on 25 July 1943 and commissioned on 27 August 1943 under LT C.R.



Hamilton, USNR, as her first commanding officer.

The *Eldridge* initially had the standard *Cannon*-class armament of three single 3-in 50-cal. Mk 26 guns, one twin 40-mm 60-cal. Bofors Mk 1 Mod. 2 AA, and eight single 20-mm 70-cal. Oerlikon Mk 10 mounts, along with one triple 21-in torpedo tube mount, eight Mk 6 depth charge mortars, two Mk 9 depth charge racks, and a Hedgehog ASW spigot mortar; prior to her departure for Pacific Ocean duty during 1945, the torpedo tubes were replaced by two more twin 40-mm mounts (each 40-mm mount had an associated Mk 51 Mod. 2 lead-computing director) and the 20-mm battery was augmented to seven twin Mki 24 Oerlikon mounts, each with Mk 14 lead-computing sites. The 3-in guns had a Mk 52 director, equipped with a Mk 26 fire-control radar, as well as a separate rangefinder for surface fire control. The torpedo tube set had no director; it was aimed and fired locally.

Eldridge was 306-ft. overall (300-ft waterline) by 36-ft. 10-in. beam and drew about 10 ft. 5 3/4 inches. Designed full load displacement was 1,670 tons, but by the time the Greek Navy got her, she displaced about 1,750. Design speed was 21 kts, but best speed for a typical unit of the class was 19 kts. The *Cannon* class had diesel electric drive, using four General Motors 16-278A diesels to drive generator sets, which drove two motors with a nominal output of 6,000 ship. Trials with the *Levy* (DE, DE-162) of the class showed an output of only 5,150 ship total for a speed of 20.2 kts at 1,525 tons displacement. Range on the maximum stowage of 316 tons of fuel oil was 10,800 miles at 12 kts or 6,700 kts at 18 kts. The ships had two 200 kw and one 100 kw diesel generator sets. Standard crew in USN service during WW II was 15 officers and 201 enlisted, but the Greeks ran the ships with about 185 total personnel.

Eldridge began operations on 4 January 1944 on the first of nine convoy escort deployments to the Mediterranean, with the convoys having destinations of Oran, Bizerte, and Casablanca. The ship left the New York Navy Yard, Brooklyn, New York, for the Pacific on 28 May 1945, arriving at Saipan during July. She arrived at Guam on 7 August 1945 to perform local escort duties—a week prior to

(Continued on page 5)

(Mystery Photo—Continued from page 4)

the end of hostilities in the Pacific. The *Eldridge* continued to perform convoy escort duties on the Ulithi-Saipan-Guam run into November 1945, when she headed back to U.S. waters; as mentioned above, she was decommissioned to reserve on 17 June 1946.”

Now, about that mystery within a mystery, what’s that all about? One thing the very pragmatic Dave Baker failed to mention in his response was the details surrounding an incident that purportedly happened to *Eldridge* very early in her service - an incident that I found a reference to at the bottom of the NavSource and Naval Historical Center listings for this vessel. (Key the theme from X-Files again.)

Of all the mythology out there, several stories are new enough that their origins don’t predate the ability of modern science to record their happening – provided the technology is present to record the event and the results are shared. Unlike science fiction, where we have to suspend our belief in the physical sciences to allow the fiction to entertain us – the Star Trek transporter for instance - these modern myths persist without hard evidence. Sometimes the continued retelling of an event propels the event to cult status. Take the alleged alien spacecraft crash at Roswell, New Mexico in 1947. Did it happen? Hard to say, but as the number of ‘eye witnesses’ shrinks with the passage of time, memories will become fuzzier; evidence – if it exists - will continue to disappear, and it will become harder and harder to get at the truth.

Probably second only to the Roswell incident, another popular myth has received its share of notoriety - The Philadelphia Experiment. Officially(?) dubbed ‘Project Rainbow’, the Philadelphia Experiment has also captured eager imaginations for the last 60-odd years. The simple version of this story describes a project (a naval experiment) to help make ships invisible - presumably to magnetic mines. The project is first revealed in 1955 after author Morris K. Jessup publishes his book The Case for UFO's. Shortly afterward, he received correspondence that alludes to an experiment where “a ship [is] rendered invisible and teleported to and from Norfolk in a few minutes, with some terrible after-effects for crew members.” The letter indicates that “this incredible feat was accomplished by applying Einstein's "unified field" theory.” The letter was written by, apparently the event’s sole eye witness, one mysterious Carlos Miquel Allende. Allende reports to having witnessed the event from a nearby ship, the civilian merchant vessel *SS Andrew Furuseth*.

Following this revelation, the story takes the usual macabre twists and turns of a true techno-thriller: sources and witnesses disappear or cannot be found; evidence cannot be verified or is lost; allegations cannot be verified or prove false; there are inferences that nothing received from Government sources can be trusted; etc.

In the mid sixties, these kinds of stories, receive

quasi-legitimacy, when Hollywood began to serialize science fiction in “Prime Time” with shows like *Lost-In-Space* and *Star-Trek*. The audience, wanting to believe that their future is reflected in these shows, grasps at these ideas in order to bridge the gap between today and tomorrow. And stories like *The Philadelphia Experiment* smooth their psyche. Over time, modern mythology begins to replace truth and physical reality and quickly become accepted as real (sort of a variation of letting the Genie out of the bottle.) The more fanciful the tale, the more government involvement, the better the legend becomes. After a span of 60-years, a story like *Project Rainbow* assumes its own momentum and it becomes nearly impossible to tell fact from fiction. Remember this though, there is evidence to suggest that science fiction accurately foretells the future. You all remember *Dick Tracy* and his wrist TV? Well, don’t you!!!

If you care to read more about what may have happened to *Eldridge*, you can visit several web sites to read about *Project Rainbow*, a Google search will get you there. But you may find that the sensationalized accounts of what happened have more holes in them than Roger Cole’s clam dredges. I trust data on the internet even less than I trust data from other sources. I suggest you limit your reading of this incident to the published account at the Naval Historical Center; it seems to be the most objective.

Did all of this happen? I don’t know, this is October after all, time for ghouls and goblins and things that go bump in the night. I think a more plausible explanation goes something like this: Bill Clarke, working in his secret FDL (*Food De Leon*) laboratory under this Mother’s garage, conspired to shrink an actual ship and teleport it to a local ship model contest with the hopes of taking the top prize for scale fidelity. In reality he set in motion events that led the United States to transfer *Eldridge* to the Greek Navy and have her renamed *Leon*.

Tom: thanks for a deep vein to mine!

John Cheevers

From JIM STEIN’S NAUTICAL TERMS

Bulwarks. The wood work round a vessel, above her deck, consisting of boards fastened to stanchions and timber-heads.

Cat-Head. Large timbers projecting from the vessel's side, to which the anchor is raised and secured.

Clew. The lower corner of square sails, and the after corner of a fore-and-aft sail.

Gammoning. The lashing by which the bowsprit is secured to the cutwater.

NOTABLE EVENTS

OCTOBER

- 8 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Greg Harrington
How To Make Art Work and other tips on Ordering
Brass Etchings; John Cheevers
- 16-17 Classic Boat Show, Mariners' Museum
- 30 HRSMS Picnic - Newport News Park

NOVEMBER

- 12 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host; Heinz Schiller
Making Scale People; Bob Comet

DECEMBER

- 10 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Jack Bobbitt
Auction, Dave Baker Auctioneer

JANUARY

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

FEBRUARY

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

MARCH

- 11 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Tim Wood

APRIL

- 8 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Bob Baycar

MAY

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

JUNE

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

JULY

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

AUGUST

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

SEPTEMBER

- 9 **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
Webmaster: Greg Harrington (757) 930-4615

Next Meeting

Date: October 8, 2004

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

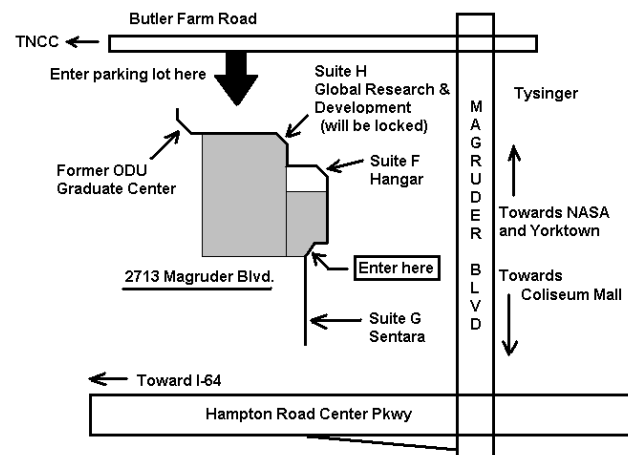
1: Merge onto I-64 W. 15.30 miles

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



A Good Web Site

<http://home.att.net/~ShipModelFAQ/Contents.html>

Thanks

The members would like to thank Dean Sword and His wife ,Dee for hosting the September meeting.