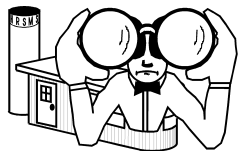


## From The Bridge



I said it before that ship models are where you find them. Well, I found this one through a colleague at work. Mr. Kenny Pope, who labors by day as a construction supervisor overseeing the outfitting of aircraft carriers, worked with a few like minded souls to build this vessel out of, what else—steel! This may not be the most true-to-scale ship model around but it is in league with some efforts I’ve seen from folks who practice the art (and in this case I stress the term art.) The beauty of this model is that it is not just a static display piece, it has a dual role. Following its christening and a service trial, this vessel made its first patrol smoking pork shoulder at the recent 2008 Chesapeake Jubilee and adds a new definition to the term “pig boat.” Maybe you saw it there.

We ship modelers seem to be the only group with a vocal disdain for models that are not absolutely true to scale. I guess that, outside of pond models, we lack official stand-off scales and classifications enjoyed by certain airplane and train groups in our judging criteria. We seem to lack the compassion to accept models that aren’t faithful copies of the prototype or that don’t maintain strict scale fidelity. In most cases I agree with this prejudice, but in other ways I have room to admire models that fall more to the artistic side of the spectrum.

This artistic rendition of a modern nuclear attack submarine certain has my admiration. I admire the craftsmanship and the originality of the project. And that is what I think is the crux of the matter—the silent debate between art and

*(Continued on page 2)*

## NAUTICAL TERM

**Donkey's Breakfast** A sailor's nickname for a straw mattress, issued in some forecastles in the early XIX century.

Submitted By: Tim Wood

## MEETING NOTICE

**Date:** Saturday June 14, 2008

**Place:** Mariners' Museum

**Time:** 1400 Hours

## Mystery Photo



Mystery Photo #263: Four folks responded to try and identify the vessel in the sharpest, clearest image we’ve used in along while. At play is an image of a yacht converted to naval service as a patrol vessel. Her portrait, here, does not depict wartime service. We can tell by her livery: It appears to be the standard U.S. Navy pre World War One (WW1) scheme of a white hull with buff stack and lower mast partners. Some of her woodwork seems to be varnished as well. The official U.S. Navy designation for a vessel like this is PY for Patrol Yacht. This designation also carried a serial number which we will get to in the course of solving this mystery.

This image itself is the product of a super sharp original print that has been expertly scanned and cleaned slightly with some image processing software by Bill Clarke’s friend Nobe Smith, notably of Atlantic Fleet Sales. I happened to be with Bill Clarke when he found this image and I insisted he buy it even though his purchase of it was already a foregone conclusion. The original print is an actual picture post card. The image is not one I’ve seen before.

In three prior wars the United States was forced to augment its patrol assets with existing civilian craft and small vessels. For our involvement in WWI that contingent was partially made up of large yachts from the gilded age, this mystery vessel being one. Since these wartime draftees usually were painted gray, it can be surmised that this image was made sometime after the war. I seriously doubt that she was armed and in WWI service prior to receiving her gray coat.

Our players were slightly all over the board with their responses. Tim Wood ‘had a pretty good idea what type of craft [he] was looking at from some of the previous *Mystery Photos...*’ He identified the vessel as “USS *Niagara* (SP-136, later PY-9), 1918-1933, originally Steam Yacht *Niagara* (1898).” Newcomer to the game Hugh Van Brimer thinks the “mystery vessel may be USS *Mayflower* (PY-1.)” Dave Baker agrees with Tim and thinks “the latest HRSMS Mystery Ship is the U.S. Navy yacht *NIAGARA* (PY 8), with the photo taken post-WW I during the period 1924 to 1931 when she was used primarily as a survey ship.” And Alan Frazer is “quite sure that lovely yacht in *May Logbook* is *Grille*, commonly known as “Hitler’s yacht.””

So, who is right?

If Tim is right, he’ll have the satisfaction of “beating Capt. Comet to the punch!” If Hugh is correct, we have an image documenting the vessel that was the “site of the Russo-

*(Continued on page 2)*

craftsmanship in ship models. I believe that a ship model should exhibit the best possible scale fidelity and project exceedingly high standards for craftsmanship. I also believe that



a well presented ship model has to reflect an equally high standard of artistic impression.



When I look at it this way, I can admire a lot more models. So the message is: if you cannot be true to scale you better be artistic. Let the debate begin.

John

"I know who you are, but you'll have to wipe your feet."  
-Capt. Richard Brown of the schooner America to Prince Albert of England, 1851

(Continued from page 1)



Mystery Photo

Japanese peace treaty conference and later the presidential yacht until 1929." If Dave is right, then "the shot may have been taken at Philadelphia." And if Alan is right, then the image stirred some strong memories from his past when he spied her scrapping in "1956 or 1957, [while] commuting by car from Beverly, New Jersey, to Trenton, where [he] caught an early commuter train to New York."

Not to keep you in suspense any longer, this month's Mystery Photo captures the Patrol Yacht *Niagara* (PY-9) tied to a pier. While the location is unknown as of this writing, sharp eyed Dave says that the "pier looks like one I once moored to in Boston," and sharp eyed Alan says that the "pier is certainly typical of New York's waterfront, the boxcar is "American," and the several deck guns, added life raft and extra lifeboat indicate a naval vessel." Perhaps Bill can share other details about the photograph and post card.

Details of *Niagara* and her characteristics come from Tim and Dave's replies:

From Tim: "*Niagara* was built in 1898 at Wilmington, Delaware by Harlan and Hollingsworth. She was purchased by the Navy from Howard Gould of New York City in 1917 and converted to a patrol vessel and commissioned in April 1918 as USS *Niagara* (SP-136). *Specifications*: Displacement 2,690 t.; Length 282'; Beam 43'; Draft 17'; Speed 12 kts.; Complement 195; Armament four 4", two machine guns and one "Y" gun."

From Dave: "The NIAGARA was completed as a yacht in 1898 by James Shewan and Sons, Brooklyn, NY (although DANFS says it was Harlan and Hollingsworth at Wilmington, Delaware, the Navy's SHIPS DATA for 1 July 1922 gives Shewan's as the builder) for Howard Gould, a son of the (in)famous "robber baron" financier Jay Gould, of New York. Retaining her name, she was purchased by the Navy for \$175,000.00 on 10 August 1917 from Mr. Gould, converted as an armed patrol ships by Tobo's Yacht Basin, Brooklyn, NY, and commissioned there on 16 April 1918 with the hull number SP-136.

The ship began her first merchant convoy escort on 21 May 1918 on a voyage to the Azores and was then assigned to the American Patrol Detachment at Grassy

(Continued on page 3)

## THE ANSWER

The answer to Mystery Photo 264:  
USS *Niagara* (Flagship, Service Squadron)  
The MP image was taken from postcard.

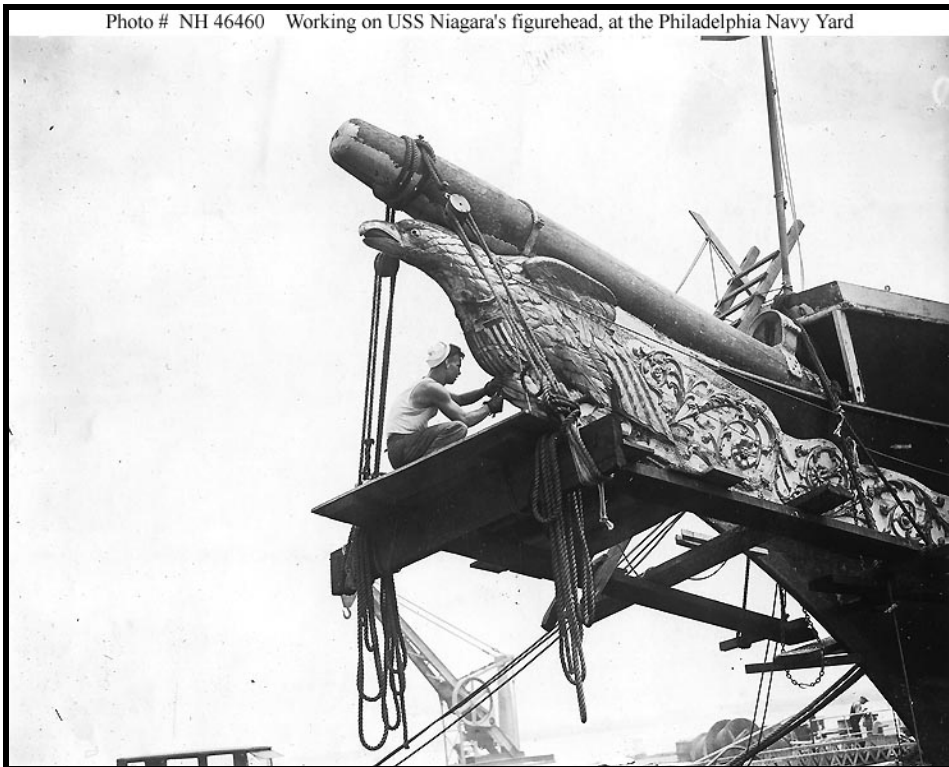
(Continued from page 2)



Bay, Bermuda. For the remainder of the war, her wartime duties took her to the West Indies. On 17 July 1920, she was renumbered PY 9 in conjunction with the unified numbering system imposed on commissioned U.S. Navy ships month; PY at that time stood for "Patrol Vessels—Converted Yachts." The ship was decommissioned at the Philadelphia Navy Yard on 21 April 1922 but after alterations to allow her to perform hydrographic survey duties for the Navy Hydrographic Office, she recommissioned at the yard on 24 June 1924 and began an 8-year career charting the sea bottom in the Gulf of Venezuela and along the coast of Central America, with her final cruise concluding at Philadelphia on 17 October 1930. Decommissioned on 3 March 1931, the NIAGARA was stricken from the Navy List on 10 December 1931 and sold on 13 September 1933 to Northern Metal Co., Philadelphia, for scrapping.

NIAGARA was some 282 ft long over her stub bowsprit (245 ft overall hull) by 36 ft beam and drew 17 ft

Photo # NH 46460 Working on USS Niagara's figurehead, at the Philadelphia Navy Yard



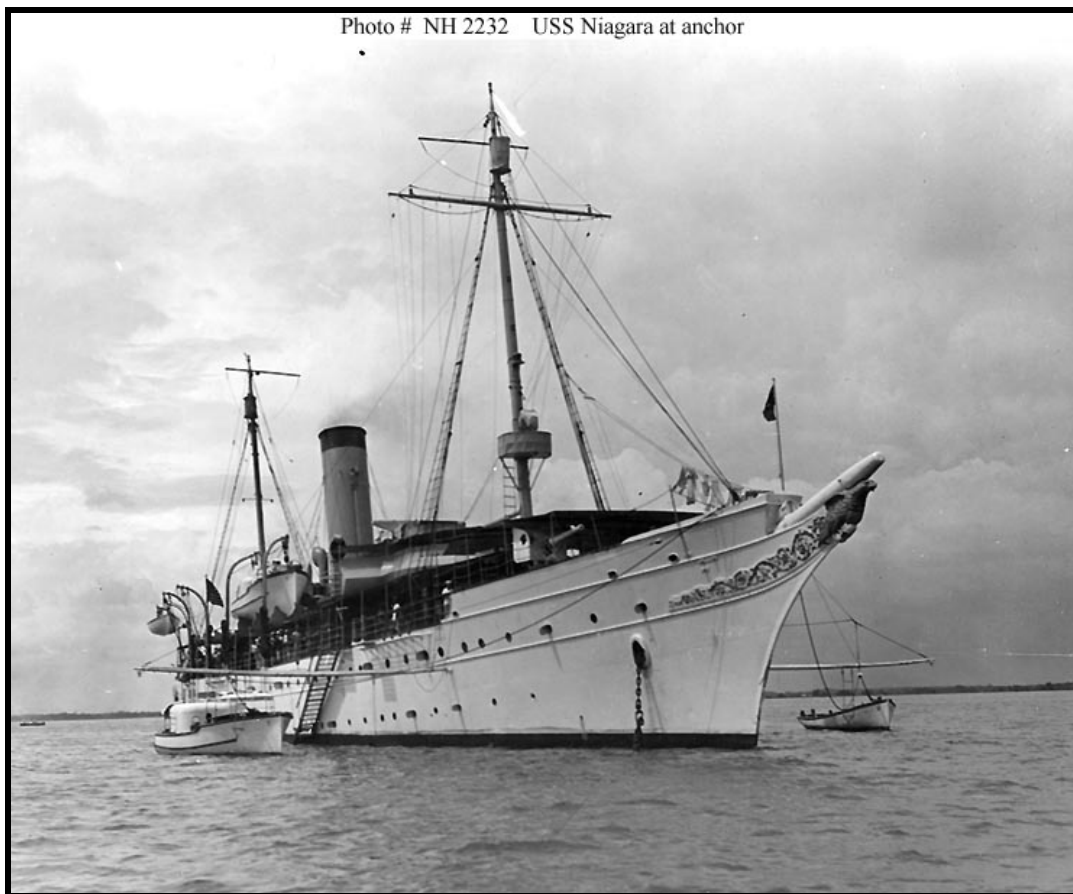
at her normal displacement of 2,600 tons. Her gross registered tonnage as a yacht had been 1,433 tons and her net tonnage 703. With a 400-ton full load of coal, her endurance

was 3,500 nautical miles at 12 kts. The engineering plant consisted of three Babcock and Wilcox boilers that provided steam to two sets of de Laval-Sprague vertical triple expansion engines, each with cylinders of 15, 24, and 45-in diameter and a stroke of 30 inches; the engines produced a total of 1,800 indicated horsepower. During her survey ship years, the PY-9 had a complement of 11 officers, 12 chief petty officers, and 114 enlisted personnel, but as an escort during World War I, she carried a total of 195 personnel.

The NIAGARA was given one of the heaviest armaments provided to any of the yachts acquired for World War I service: four 4-in. 50-cal.

(Continued on page 6)

Photo # NH 2232 USS Niagara at anchor



# MINUTES



## HAMPTON ROADS SHIP MODEL SOCIETY

Monthly Meeting

May 10, 2008

Mariners' Museum

Guests: Walt Gundaker, Jack Menke

The meeting was called to order by the Skipper, John Cheevers at 1408 hours. The guests were recognized and welcomed. There were no corrections to the minutes as published. Eric Harfst gave the Purser's report. Eric said that he was not happy with the rate of dues collection. He also gave the final accounting of the banquet expenditures. Greg Harrington gave the Webmaster's report and detailed his interaction with our web provider.

Old Business: The Skipper asked if there was any need to discuss the details of the October picnic. No picnic discussion was needed. John asked if the right people were present to discuss our participation in the International Plastic Model Society (IPMS) National Convention. Dave Baker said that he had been in contact with Charles Landrum and that Charles asked if we would be interested in sponsoring the award for the "Best Sailing Ship Model". After talking about the convention, a motion was made and passed to sponsor the award. It was noted that we would discuss our procurement of exhibition tables at the IPMS convention at the June meeting and look for people willing to man the tables during the convention.

New Business? Alan Frazer had some semi-loose pages from a WWI era book on battleships and cruisers to give away. The Skipper suggested that those who were interested in the items should thumb-wrestle Alan after the meeting.

Show & Tell: Bob Comet said there was an employee who was interested in the Franklin framed frigate in the Taco Stand. Bob asked if we wanted to keep it or let the man have it to complete. The consensus was to let him have it. Bob said that he would take care of the issue. John Cheevers showed a copy of Bill Clarke and Dave Wooley's book, Warships and Warship Modelling. John also showed the progress on his tug the *Susan Moran*. Dean Sword showed his work on a T2 tanker solid hull using basswood lifts. Dave Baker showed a book, Naval Firepower : Battleship Guns and Gunnery in the Dreadnought Era, by Norman Friedman, with A.D. Baker III (Illustrator). Dave talked about his trip to the San Diego Maritime Museum, noting the condition of the *HMS Surprise* and the *Star of India* and a side trip to the Palm Springs Aviation Museum. A member (name not recorded) showed a half-model of a Skipjack and Jack Menke showed a working transmission for a scale model warship. Bob Comet talked about several of his recent projects, the Peapod, the *Nashville* and a resin kit of the *Albemarle*.

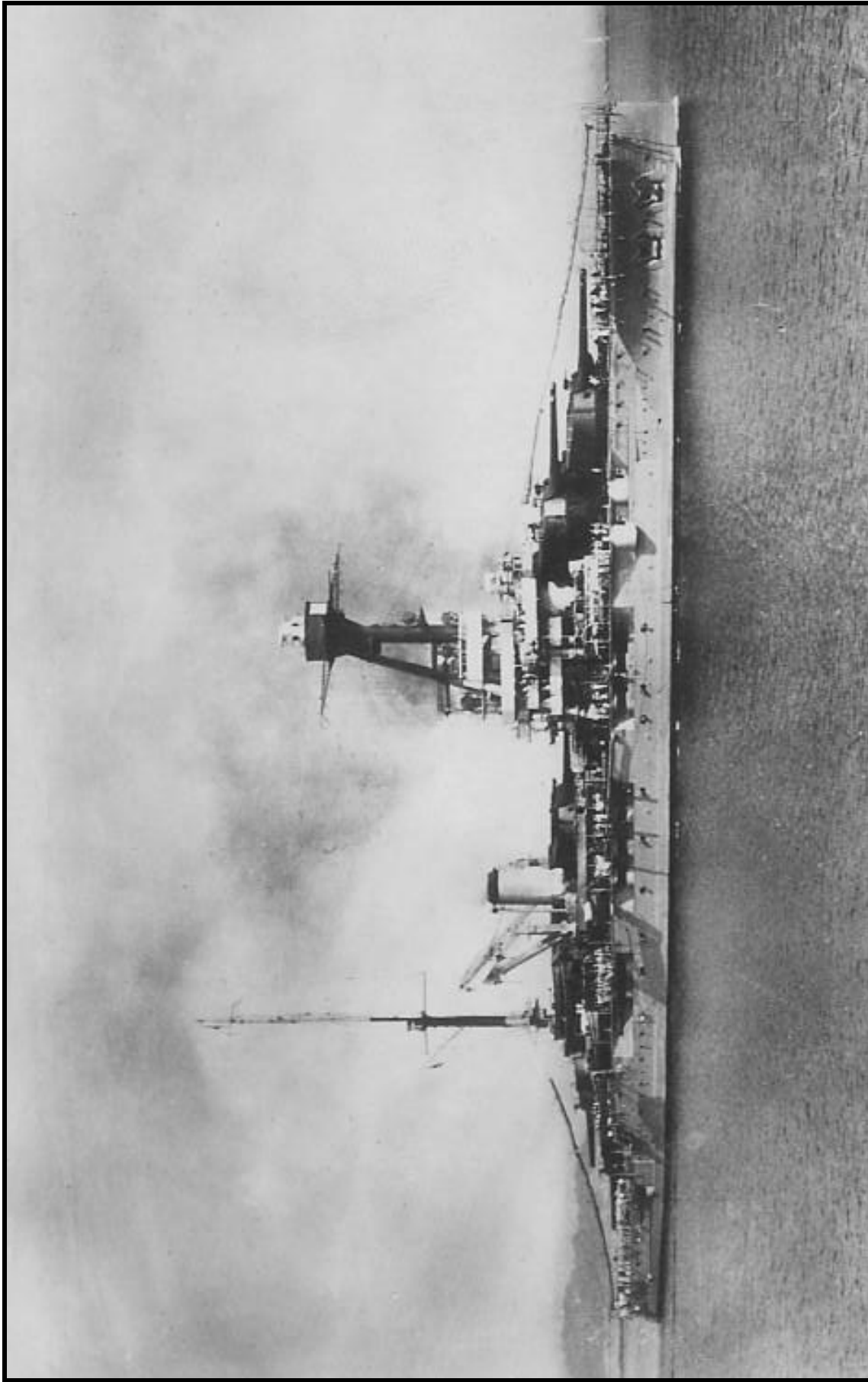
The meeting was adjourned to a presentation "Making Sculpy Figures" By Bob Comet.

The following quiz was submitted by Tim Wood. The 43 questions will appear in the next several issues of the Log-book. Keep track of your score.

## Battleship Quiz

1. Name the battleship that sailed from Bremerton, Washington to Florida around South America to engage the Spanish Fleet in Cuba in 1898. (1 point)
2. What battleship was not a "battleship" when it was sunk at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941? (2 points)
3. Only one pre-Dreadnought battleship exists today. Name it. (1 point) Bonus: What is its role in history? (1 point)
4. What battleship bears the nickname "The Big Jay"? (1 point)
5. Name the two largest battleships ever built. (1 point each)
6. What is the only US Battleship not named for a State? (1 point)
7. What states have never had commissioned battleships/battlecruisers named for them? (2 points each)
8. What battleship was known as the "Lone Queen of the North"? (1 point)
9. The US entered the "battlecruiser" race late, after "fast battleships" forces them to be reclassified as "large cruisers." Name the six ships of this class, and the name of the two completed. (total of 8 points)
10. Name the only United States World War I battleship still afloat. (1 point)
11. Name the two Dreadnoughts sunk at sea by Japanese aircraft in early December, 1941. (1 point)
12. True or False: The "old battleships" (pre-Washington naval treaty) never had a successful surface engagement with enemy battleships in World War II. (1 point)
13. True or False: The "new battleships" (post-Washington naval treaty) never had a surface engagement with enemy battleships in World War II. (1 point)
14. The USS Arizona was not deployed in England with the Grand Fleet in World War I, unlike other US battleships. Why? (2 points)

**Answers on page 6**



### **Mystery Photo**

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

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## NOTABLE EVENTS

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### JUNE

- 14 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Presentation "Tools for the Beginning Ship Modeler"  
by John Cheevers

### JULY

- 12 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Presentation "Scale; A Matter of Proportion"  
by Tony Clayton

### AUGUST

- 6-9 IPMS National Convention, Virginia Beach, Va.  
16 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Presentation "Shipmodeling Research via the Internet"  
by John Wyld

### SEPTEMBER

- 13 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Presentation "Tall Ships Op Sail Photographs"  
by Peter Tagg

### OCTOBER

- 11 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Picnic, Newport News Park



### More of the Pig Boat

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"There is but a plank between a sailor and eternity."  
Thomas Gibbons

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## NOTE!

The date of the August meeting has been  
changed due to a conflict with the  
IPMS Convention

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## Have you paid your 2008 dues?

Please save the Purser a stamp!

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## Battleship Quiz (Answers)

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1. BB3 - USS Oregon
2. BB31 - USS Utah. At the time she was designated AG16 - a gunnery training ship.
3. IJN Mikasa (Albiet afloat in concrete.) She was the flagship of Admiral Togo at the battle of Tsushima in 1905.
4. BB62 - USS New Jersey
5. IJN Yamato and IJN Musashi
6. BBS - USS Kearsarge
7. Montana (BB51 and BB67) and Hawaii (CB3), were never completed, therefore never commissioned.
8. The Bismarck's sister ship, the Tirpitz.
9. CB1 - USS Alaska (completed), CB2 - USS Guam (completed), CB3 - USS Hawaii, CB4 - USS Philippines, CB5 - USS Puerto Rico, CB6 - USS Samoa
10. BB35 - USS Texas
11. HMS Prince of Wales and HMS Repulse
12. False! One example is the "old battleships" engaged and sank the Fuso and Yamashiro at the battle of Surigao Strait in the Philippines in 1944. Several of these battleships were those raised and rebuilt after being sunk at Pearl Harbor in 1941.
13. False! One example is the USS South Dakota and USS Washington engaging and sinking the Kirishima of Guadalcanal in 1942.
14. She was too new and burned oil. England had an oil shortage, but an abundance of coal. Therefore, only coal-burning battleships were deployed with the Royal Navy.

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*(Continued from page 3)*



Mystery Photo

guns (single-mounted in pairs abreast at the sides fore and aft), two .50-cal. machine guns, and a "Y-gun" mortar at the stern to launch depth charges. During the 1920s, she retained the 4-in. guns and also carried two 3-pdr guns aft for saluting duties; the machineguns and Y-gun were removed."

Sorry this column is short and sweet, but I'm pressed for time.

John Cheevers

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## WATCH, QUARTER AND STATION BILL



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Purser: Eric Harfst (757) 221-8181  
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