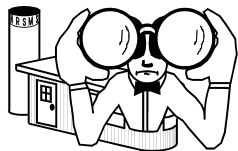


## From The Bridge



## Mystery Photo



It is hard to believe that another year has flown by and that the Christmas holiday will be here shortly. It seems this year that the retailers had their stores decorated for the holiday season shortly after Halloween had ended. As a family, we gathered all of the grandkids and went to see Santa Claus the weekend before Thanksgiving. We visited Santa at the Yankee Candle store in Williamsburg. If you are not familiar with Yankee Candle, it is a large retail establishment that sells more than just candles. The inside of the store has many themed areas and one of the areas is dedicated to Christmas year round. But they also decorate the store for the holidays and Santa is moved out of his workshop into the center court area. Here the kids line up to see Santa and have their picture taken. For our youngest granddaughter, it was her first visit with Santa. She was totally in awe at Santa, admiring his bushy white beard and his red Santa suit with white furry cuffs. I could not help to wonder what was going through her little mind. Less than a year old, everything to her is a learning experience.

At this time of the year, we tend to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of shopping and trying to find the perfect gift for our loved ones. But, let us not forget to remember those people who are special to us, those that have health problems and those that have passed away. If you have time, make contact with a special friend or one that is going through some tough times. There is no better gift than the gift of friendship. You could brighten someone's day.

The year 2011 has been a good year for the Society. We have seen an increase in membership and a lot of interest from prospective members. We have enjoyed the presentations that have been presented at each meeting. The one area that I am impressed by is the show-n-tell. We have all learned so much from the models, works in progress, tools, books and other items that members bring in each month. The discussions resulting from the show-n-tell have really been interesting and educational. I always look forward to this part of the meeting.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone this Saturday, and if you cannot make it to the meeting, I hope that you have a happy and safe holiday season.

Ryland

Mystery Photo #305: Sometimes identifying the Mystery Photo is like watching an episode of Cheers—the vessel sails into view and everyone knows its name. Five replies were unanimous in identifying the vessel as the World War II troopship *USS West Point*, AP 23. The fab five are Dave Baker, Bob Moritz, Tony Clayton, Hugh Van Brimer, and Rob Napier. This vessel, that Rob calls “the ship of Many Names,” was more popularly known as *SS America*, onetime flagship and longtime second banana of the famed United States Lines. The incarnation we have in Mystery Photo wears what Rob calls “the happiest camo scheme I have seen.” To salute her, instead of a beer slung down the bar to everyone's friend Norm, Hugh Van Brimer fashions his reply with an appropriate nautical greeting by sending a verbal “shot across the bow” with his identification of a vessel “built in our neighborhood.” Not a shabby introduction for a long-lived ship that earned some distinction. And, like Hugh, I thought this mystery was like spotting the kid from down the block.

Dave and Tony were the only researchers to find the image. Tony provided a web address to view it and Dave, who must be an inside trader, provided more information than that found on the on-line photo caption. The photograph was taken, as Dave allows, “On 12 June 1944 off Boston Light by a Chief Photographers Mate Foster from blimp K-38, piloted by an Ensign Livingston; at the time, the transport was on a course of 270 degrees.” For those who wish to see it in the National Archives, you can search for: Photo No. 80-G-236609. One interesting observation found in the replies is that Tony briefly flirted with calling our vessel the Cunard liner-turned-troop-ship *Queen Elizabeth* on the strength of the two prominent funnels.

According to Tony, “The *SS America* was built by the Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Com-

(Continued on page 2)

## MEETING NOTICE

**Date:** Saturday December 10, 2011

**Place:** Mariners' Museum

**Time:** 1000 Hours

(Continued from page 1)



Mystery Photo

pany and launched on August 31, 1939. Her sponsor was Eleanor Roosevelt. Interestingly, her interior was designed by women and it had the reputation of being a comfortable and friendly ship. Her troop carrying capacity was 7,678. The original design was for 543 in Cabin Class, 428 in Tourist Class, 241 in Third Class, and 643 crew. It must have been fairly crowded! (as a troopship I mean). By the way, the troop carrying capacity of the *Queen Elizabeth* was around 15,000! Also, the *Queen Elizabeth* (1940-1972) started life as a troopship before operating as a liner after W.W.2.

*SS America* was in service from 1940 to 1993 under various owners, especially United States Lines (1940-1941 and 1946-1964), and of course the United States Maritime Commission (1941-1946) as *USS West Point*. She ran aground, under tow, off the west coast of Fuerteventura in the Canary Islands in January 1994. As of February 2010, only part of the bow remains above water. After the war, the *SS United States* was built as a running

mate for the *SS America*, and proved to be a bit faster than even the *Queen Elizabeth!*”

He also provides these specifications:

“Displacement 35,440 tons, fully loaded

Length 663 ft. 6 in.

Beam 93 ft. 5 in.

Draft 32 ft. 11 in.

Power Four steam engines, powering

twin screw props.

Speed 22.5 knots

Armament 4 x 5 in., 4 x 3 in. guns and 8 x 50 cal. machine guns”

From her DANFS’ entry we find these additional facts:

“*America* was laid down under a Maritime Commission contract (MC hull 1) on 22 August 1938, at Newport News, Va., by the Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Co.; launched on 31 August 1939; and entered service as the flagship of the United States Lines on 22 August 1940, when she commenced her maiden voyage.

Although initially slated for the North Atlan-

(Continued on page 3)



CONVERSION NO. 1  
AMERICA (JO 542-5)  
LOOKING STBD. QTR. BOW  
N. N. S. & D. D. CO.  
DATE 6-2-41

**Photo No. 19-N-24561 S.S. America on 2 June 1941 beginning conversion to the West Point (AP-23)**

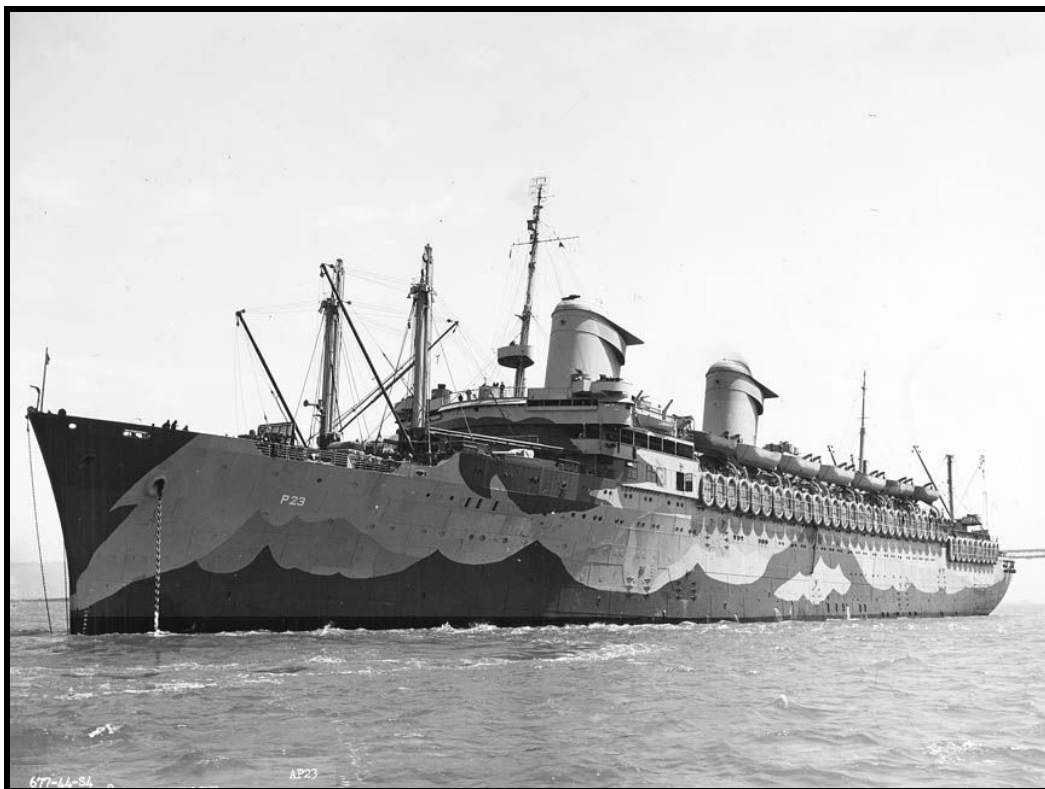
(Continued from page 2)



Mystery Photo

tic trade, *America* was deployed instead on the New York to West Indies cruise routes, because the war in Europe had resulted in the invocation of the Neutrality Act banning American ships from trade in the war zones. She made several voyages to the West Indies and two to California into the spring of 1941. Hurriedly recalled from a pleasure cruise in late May 1941, *America* moored at Norfolk and was acquired by the Navy on 1 June 1941 for conversion to a troop transport.”

Her wartime duties took her to the far corners of the world, to places like Singapore and Bombay and Australia. “In 1944, the transport continued her vital workhorse duties, departing San Francisco on 12 January, bound for Noumea and Guadalcanal; and from San Pedro, Calif., on 22 February, bound for Noumea and Milne Bay. She sailed from the latter port and steamed via the Panama Canal to Boston, Mass.,



**Photo No. 19-N-77620 USS West Point (AP-23) on 22 April, 1944**

where she arrived on 12 June” and her rendezvous with K-38 and Chief Photographers Mate Foster. “She conducted five successive voyages to the United Kingdom before departing Boston on 6 December 1944 for Oran, Algeria; Casablanca, French Morocco; and Marseille, France. The transport left the Mediterranean one day after Christmas and proceeded to Norfolk, Va.”

She finished her wartime service by participating in the “initial "Magic Carpet" voyages, bringing home American troops from the European battlefronts...she was released from troop-carrying service on 22 February, Washington's Birthday. Six days later, the ship was decommissioned and transferred to the Maritime Commission's War Shipping Administration. *West Point* was struck from the Navy list on 12 March 1946.

Carrying a total of over 350,000 phototroops during her naval service, *West Point* had the largest capacity of any Navy troopship in service during World War II. On one voyage in August 1944, she carried, including ship's company, a total of 9,305 people. In addition to troops, she had carried Red Cross workers; United Nations officials; children; civilians; prisoners of war; and U.S.O. entertainers.

Returning to her builder's yard at Newport



**The wreck of the American Star (SS America) seen in July 2004 from land side, Fuerteventura, Canary Islands.**

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)



Mystery Photo

News, *West Point* reacquired her old name—*America*—and immediately began conversion back to her original passenger-carrying configuration. She was returned to the United States Lines on 31 October 1946 and departed New York on 10 November to begin her maiden postwar crossing of the Atlantic. The liner continued to carry passengers between New York and Southampton, England, into 1964.”

Some of you may not know this but Dave reveals one of *America's* secrets: “What is interesting in the photo to me is that it shows pretty well the wartime alterations to what had been a brand-new passenger vessel, my favorite

(Continued on page 6)

# MINUTES



Hampton Roads Ship Model Society  
Monthly Meeting  
Mariners' Museum  
November 12, 2011

Guests: Fred Nelson, 1<sup>st</sup> meeting  
Bob Marchetti, 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting  
Jim Beal, 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting  
Sean Maloon, 3rd Meeting



Aircraft carrier *Forrestal* with models of the liners *United States* and *America* resting on her flight deck

The meeting was called to order by the Ryland Craze, the Skipper at 1004 hours. The Skipper welcomed first time guest, Fred Nelson and asked him to introduce himself. The other guests were recognized and it was noted that it was Jim Beal and Sean Maloon's third meeting. Sean and Jim were asked if they wanted to join the HRSMS. After an affirmative response, the guests were asked to leave the room while the vote was taken. When the guests returned to the room Sean and Jim were welcomed as new members. The Skipper asked for corrections to the minutes. One correction to the Logbook was noted however, there were no corrections to the minutes. Eric Harfst gave the pursers report.

Old Business: Due to Greg Harrington's absence there was no report given on the status of the video frame project. The International Plastic Model Society (IPMS) Old Dominion Open was the next item on the agenda. The Skipper said that the cost for us to have a table would be \$30.00 and the cost to sponsor the wooden ship model trophy would be \$25.00. The cost for those two items was approved at a previous meeting. After discussion a motion was made, seconded and passed to sponsor the overall maritime trophy at a cost of \$40.00. Bob Moritz said there would be space to display models that would not be in the competition and requested the members bring examples of their work.

New Business: Ryland Craze read a letter he received from a woman who wanted to have someone carve a Panamanian dugout canoe model for her father by Christmas. No one expressed an interest in this project. Bob Moritz said that the Richmond IPMS wants to sell (get rid of) a partially completed kit of the Sultana. Bob also noted the IPMS national convention to be held in Orlando, Florida next August.

Show & Tell: Ryland Craze showed a newly purchased Model Shipways longboat kit and a book on building the *Sherbourne*. Tim Wood showed his Constructo kit of Ernest Hemingway's yacht, *El Pilar*. John Cheevers talked about the shipyard-built 87 pound trophy for the Carrier Classic basketball game. John received an e-mail from a woman wanting help in identifying a heirloom model. He circulated pictures of the model and asked for help in the identification. John

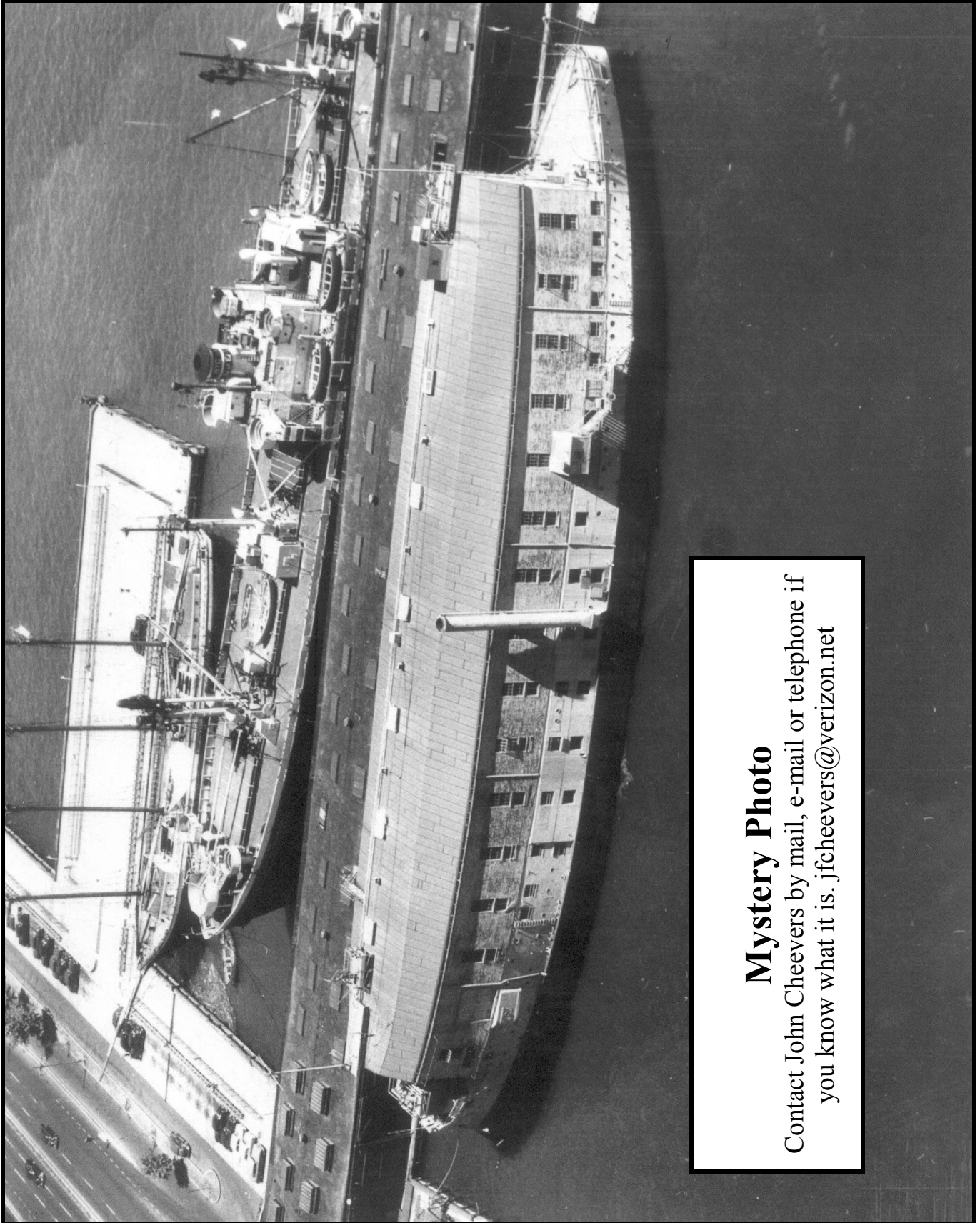
(Continued on page 6)

## NAUTICAL TERM

Clinker (also *Clinker-Built*) A method of ship and boat construction dating from Viking-ship days, of overlapping planks or strakes.

A British term clench-built, and the word relationship is apparent, as both are derived from Old English, *klenken*, to hold fast.

Submitted By: Tim Wood



## **Mystery Photo**

Contact John Cheevers by mail, e-mail or telephone if you know what it is. [jfcheevers@verizon.net](mailto:jfcheevers@verizon.net)

## NOTABLE EVENTS

---

### DECEMBER

- 10 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Presentation: Modeling in Plastic, Charles Landrum

### JANUARY

- 14 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Nomination of officers, Presentation: The New England  
Maritime Museum, Ron Lewis  
14-15 Cabin Fever Expo, York, Pa.

### FEBRUARY

- 11 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Election of officers  
Presentation: Drawing Ship Lines, John Cheevers  
25 IPMS Old Dominion Open, Richmond, Va.

### MARCH

- 10 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Presentation: Building the Oseberg Viking Ship model,  
Tony Clayton

### APRIL

- 14 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Presentation: Charles W. Morgan--the continuing saga,  
George Livingston

### MAY

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

### JUNE

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

### JULY

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

### AUGUST

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

### SEPTEMBER

- 8 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting,

### OCTOBER

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



(Continued from page 4)

being the lookout and gun fire direction platform built into the top of the dummy forward funnel.”

Mystery Photo It must have been one heck of a view and one cold and windy post. While researching for this essay, I ran across an image of *America* that compares her size with two other NNS built ships. The image captures a model of the aircraft carrier *Forrestal* with models of the liners *United States* and *America* resting on her flight deck...there is deck space to spare.

*America* finished her career as a cruise ship in the early 90's with one funnel and renamed the SS American Star. While under tow she grounded at Fuertventura, in the Canary Islands. Her wreck was visible for many years and it was in no way a fitting way to go.

John Cheevers

(Continued from page 4)



then showed a piece of syntactic foam from Freeman Manufacturing and Supply and said he would use it in a future project. Dave Chelmow showed differing types of boxwood, his Byrnes table saw and gun barrels for his *Hannah* project. Lee Martin showed Queen Mary souvenir brochure from 1937. Jim Beal talked about his *Nigeria* project. Fred Nelson showed pictures of his *Essex*. Bob Moritz showed a 20-year-old wooden hull he started and wanted to know if he should burn it. There was no resolution to this issue.

The meeting was adjourned to the presentation “2011 Nautical Guild Conference”, given by Ryland Craze

---

## HRSMS NAME TAGS

**Pin Back \$5.25**

**Magnetic Back \$7.25**

**If you need a name tag contact Ryland Craze**

**E-Mail CKart55@aol.com**

**or**

**See him at a meeting**

---

**WATCH, QUARTER  
AND  
STATION BILL**



---

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: Bill Dangler (757) 245-4142  
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

### THE ANSWER

Mystery Photo 305  
USS West Point (AP 23)  
Photo No. 80-G-236609  
12 June, 1944