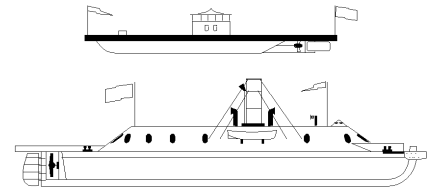


Hampton Roads Ship Model Society

Logbook



No. 310

WWW.HRSMS.ORG

April, 2012

From The Bridge



The weekend of April 14 and 15, 2012, marked the 100th anniversary of one of the most famous maritime disasters in history, the sinking of the RMS Titanic. I have been fascinated by this disaster since I was a kid, having seen some of the early movies of her sinking on television. With the discovery of the remains of the Titanic in 12,600 feet of water in 1986, renewed interest was generated about this disaster. Artifacts were recovered and exhibitions of these were held around the world. Then in 1997, Hollywood released probably the most realistic movie ever produced of the Titanic. This movie introduced this tragedy to a whole new generation of people around the world.

When the Titanic set sail on its maiden voyage in 1912, it was an engineering marvel. It was so technology advanced that it was said to be “unsinkable”. To add to the fascination of the maiden voyage, the passengers consisted of many people of wealth and high social status as well as immigrants heading to the United States seeking a new life for themselves and their families. When news of the sinking reached the public, people were shocked that this could happen. There were many myths and legends that were spun by the survivors and others. It is only recently, with the use of technology and studying the remains of the ship, that we have a better understanding as to what happened.

Over the years there have been many studies and research on the Titanic and her sinking. A simple web search on the internet will turn up many facts on the Titanic. It was interesting to learn that the gash in Titanic’s hull was 220 to 245 feet long, but recent evidence shows that there was only a 12 square foot opening in the hull for water to rush in. Also, the lifeboats were not filled to capacity as 472 seats remained unfilled.

I mentioned that the Titanic sinking was one of the most famous maritime disasters. With 1,523 fatalities, it was not the most deadly disaster. The sinking of the *Doña Paz* in 1987, with 4,341 lives lost, is the most deadly peacetime maritime disaster. For wartime disasters, the MV *Wilhelm Gustloff* was torpedoed and sunk in January, 1945 with the loss of an estimated 9,500 lives.

On March 19, our annual banquet was held at the Riverwalk Restaurant in Yorktown. We had 34 guess in attendance and

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Mystery Photo



Mystery Photo #309: Wonderful Mystery Photo. One that captures a bit of deception, something or someone called a Beach Jumper, an Operation Swiss Navy, a famous Hollywood actor, some local flair, and possibly a few other things. We have plenty to discuss concerning this image that produced no replies. Hope you enjoy the tour.

Dave Baker supplied this unique image of what appears to be an “escort” type aircraft carrier, the type made popular during World War Two (WWII) when the allies couldn’t get enough aircraft to sea, fast enough. His supplying the image certainly disqualifies him from providing what almost certainly would have been the sole reply. I say sole reply because of his close association with the individual credited with “finding” the image buried away in Government archives. If you look closely at the vessel, you quickly realize that this is not an actual escort “jeep” aircraft carrier, but a substantially smaller vessel masquerading as one. Solving the Mystery might just have become infinitely harder. Why, you ask?

I’ll tell you...

If you have a copy of [The World of Model Ships and Boats](#) written by Guy R. Williams, published in 1971, you may be familiar with a photo collage that appears on page 234 detailing the conversion of an old navy launch into a rather impressive, large-scale model of the USS Enterprise, CVN65. Those of you familiar with the movie *Tora, Tora, Tora* will remember how battleship row at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii was realistically depicted using large scale models of the doomed dreadnaughts. If you attended the next to last NRG Conference that this club threw a few years back, you might recall a slide from Dave Abbott’s “tainted mayonnaise” presentation about British RC ship modeling that featured an image where a sleepy eyed Brit was emerging from a hatch in the deck of a giant aircraft carrier model wearing a nightcap and gown. And I know more than a few of you have traded URLs for sites

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MEETING NOTICE

Date: Saturday April 21, 2012

Place: Mariners’ Museum

Time: 1000 Hours

HRSMS PROGRAMS

I am having a problem this year in putting together enough programs. So far, we have programs through May. We need presenters for June, July and August. September is picnic time, with no formal meeting. Then we need presenters for October, November and December.

Programs need not be complex or highly technical, but should be of interest to ship modelers. A topic could be related to your recent model, such as a method of making a particular part or parts. Pictures of a visit to an interesting maritime museum; or how to make or use a jig or a special tool, would be of interest to most of us.

If you would like to offer a program, please contact me at IACDMC@msn.com or at a meeting. It is good experience, and can be interesting for the presenter as well as the members present at the meeting.

Tony Clayton

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everyone enjoyed good food and fellowship. Bill Dangler was awarded the 2012 Founders Award and was given a replica of the HRSMS Ship's Bell.

I want to thank Tony Clayton for his presentation on the Osberg Viking Ship model at last month's meeting. It was very interesting and we all learned more about the Vikings and their ships.

I look forward to seeing everyone Saturday.

Ryland

(Continued from page 1)



highlighting a giant scale Graf Spee, or maybe the odd Titanic and such.

Mystery Photo

Large scale models of ships are not new and are not restricted to the hobbyist. In fact, most hobbyists are sparsely and monetarily restricted to building that which we can fit into something a wee bit smaller than a streamlined trailer—Right Gene? Large scale models are usu-



ally the province of movie town, government bond drives, and first rate museums, and once their usefulness is over relegated to the back lot. And so, with this in mind, what can we say about this month's Mystery Photo?

Well, the first remark I would make is you either know what it is and can tell its story or you can't. And I wouldn't either, if it wasn't for a fortuitous connection with the International Naval Research Organization, Inc. (INRO) and their quarterly journal called Warship International (WI)—it's called a subscription. Do you all remember that Japanese gunboat featured in Mystery Photo several month's ago? Well the solution to that MP was in WI Vol. 44, No 4, and beginning on page 345, a page which just happens to be on the right side of the gutter. Can you guess what's on the left side of the gutter? Yep, our Mystery Photo is presented as one of three images in a collage as INRO's Mystery Photo #169. There it is at the bottom of the page.

Ok. Now we have a second sighting but not much else to go on. I do know that the good folks who produce WI are very diligent in providing their reader's solutions to their mysteries. It just so happens that their solution came in the very next issue. For this essay I will set aside the responses submitted by fellow INRO members and concentrate on the essay compiled by Christopher Wright beginning on page 54. The article is titled Mystery Photo 169 – The Answer. I will use the data he supplies but present it in my own way using additional data gathered from other sources. Some of what follows was gleaned from the book Splinter fleet: the Wooden Subchasers of World War II, by Theodore R. Treadwell, and found on Google books.

We are all familiar with operation Overlord, the Allied invasion of Continental Europe in June of 1944, but how many of you are familiar with operation Olympic? Operation Olympic was the planned invasion of the Japanese mainland set to begin November 15, 1945. Knowing how much the phantom 1st Army commanded by General Patton held down German forces far from the Overlord beachhead helped the Allies; a similar but different ruse was planned for Japan. The idea for Japan was to fake a landing two weeks before the actual date in order to force the Japanese to move their defenses out of position and to use up their "Cherry Blossom" weapons of last resort against the ruse thereby aiding the real landing. This thinking was initiated by the first kamikaze attacks against US forces in Leyte Gulf in 1944 and cemented by the real world experience at Okinawa where the "Divine Wind" took such a terrible toll in man and ships.

At the same time there existed classified units of the United States Navy whose charter was tactical cover and deception. They were organized under Admiral H. Kent Hewitt, then commander of Amphibious Forces and they were called Beach Jumpers (BJs). Their mission is rather self explanatory. The idea for the BJ's was pitched to the Navy Brass by Hollywood actor turned naval officer Douglas Fairbanks Jr. who cut his jib in this field while working with the British in channel harassment raids against German positions. These raids gave Fairbanks a true appreciation for the military art of deception. Simply put, Beach Jumpers were tasked with tricking

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the enemy.



Mystery Photo

The first BJ commander was Captain Anthony L. Rorschach who set up shop right in our back yard when a bean field straddling the Norfolk - Virginia Beach city line near Little Creek was turned into Camp Bradford, literally overnight. Lieutenant Fairbanks because of his “across the pond” experience joined the group and “was responsible for the supervision, training, supplying, and planning for all BJ activities: all raids, special assault landings, and special operations.” Interestingly enough one of the BJ’s favorite deception tools was amplified sound. The



theory being that the “physiological and psychological effects of sound in warfare would scare the *be-Jesus* out of the enemy.” There is some speculation that the resulting “BJ” factor used in deception planning may be the inspiration for the cover name “Beach Jumpers.”

Back to the deception plan that was to precede operation Olympic: With the kamikaze experience fresh on naval planner’s minds and with the existence of the Beach Jumpers, naval strategists set about creating a false fleet capable of deceiving the Japanese. Part of the deception involved decoy ships. The order to produce these decoy ships fell under the code name Operation Swiss Navy. Clever name as one has to assume that, like a mirage, the Swiss Navy didn’t exist either.

“In this frame of mind, *SC-449* was ordered for conversion” to a facsimile jeep carrier and the conversion was to take place where the vessel was currently stationed—a Coast Guard turned Naval Amphibious Training Base ideally sited on the outer Banks of North Carolina” on Ocracoke Island. Also by coincidence and because of its remoteness, this base had become the home of Beach Jumper training. The conversion occurred between October and November of 1944. The vessel, a 110 foot minesweeper, was stripped of everything topsides except her deckhouse and stack and then a wooden framework resembling a carrier flight deck was erected over everything. The icing on this cake came in the form of a structure that truly resembled a CVE island house and mast.

Despite its new guise and camouflage paint scheme, the subchasers hull is still very distinctive in our Mystery Photo. Two prominent rubbing strakes can be seen; the deck edge one runs the length of the hull while the lower one begins about 1/3 of the way aft between the prominent third and

fourth port light (Actually, there are five port lights per side but the foremost one is not visible in the image.) and goes to the transom stern. One obvious give-away that this is a small vessel and not a true jeep carrier is the wave pattern that is being generated. And it’s not clear from the image whether the vessel is in a port heel due to the sea or turning to starboard, but it is clear that the resulting list helps to hide the objects on the flight deck.

SC-449 was built by Luders Marine Construction Company, Stamford, Connecticut and was the first of a handful of prototypes intended to update the well known 110 foot design from the Great War into a serviceable craft for World War II. Laid down in 1939 she was commissioned September 25, 1940. Displacing 132 tons, she was 110’ long, 18’-4” wide, and drew 6’-5” in draft. Speed was 15.3 kts on two 800bhp Cooper Bessemer EN-8 diesel engines. Her complement was 28. *SC-449* was more stable than the production model subchaser which was only 17’ wide and displaced only 95 tons. The extra width of *SC-449* was probably the catalyst in her choice for conversion to a model carrier; that and availability. It’s noted that despite her 50 percent increase in initial stability over the standard model subchaser the conversion concept was considered too tender for open water use. Perhaps we see this in our Mystery Photo.

The conversion was well executed. However, this decoy carrier does not look like the familiar “Kaiser” built *Casablanca* class or the *Commencement Bay* type; she looks like the converted merchant ship type that Christopher Wright identifies as the “*Bogue*-class.” And the *Bogue*’s themselves are conversions of the merchant C-3 type break-bulk cargo ship—their conversions to aircraft carriers happened in much the same way as our little conversion. Some 37 C-3 conversions were made with 11 serving in the US Navy and the remainder going to the Royal Navy. In the real carriers, the conversion was austere. The hulls were taken in during construc-

Sea Trial, *SC-449* camouflaged as CVE9 Class “Jeep” Aircraft Carrier



tion where a flight deck was erected over the existing main deck. That deck became the hanger deck and plane crews had to struggle with servicing aircraft on a deck still fitted with sheer and camber. *SC-449* had no such hanger space, but

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Mystery Photo

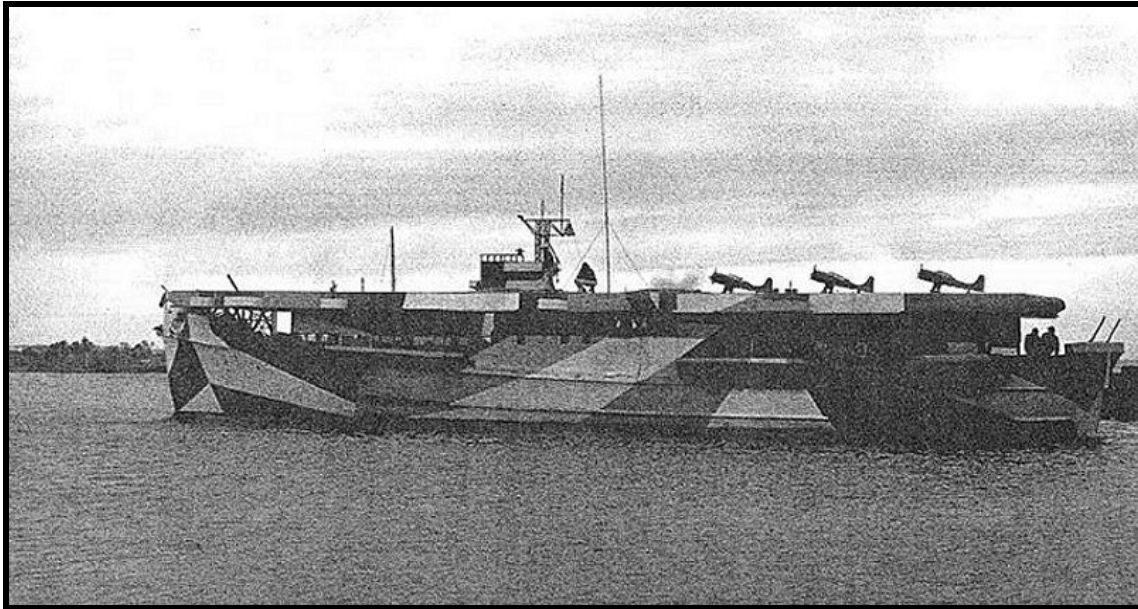
since she was to emulate a carrier, she carried three dummy aircraft (Dauntless dive bombers) which could be moved about the deck using a system of below deck pulleys. (You have to wonder just how close to the enemy these decoys were intended to get.)

SC-449 remained in this configuration until sometime in early 1945, and presumably the decoy was tested in-

really sure what an “entertainment” vessel is or where to find one but that owner did have her re-engined as noted below:

This information was gleaned from a forum set up by Red Power Magazine. Now comrade, before you rat anyone out, you need to know that this rag does not promote subversive behavior or un-American activity; it’s a publication that deals with red painted engines for the International Harvester construction, farm equipment, and antique engine collecting kind of folk. I first ran across it when I was dead sure I

would win that restored 1948 Farmall Cub Cadet that I held a raffle ticket for. At the forum, the guy is only known only as “Henry 455,” but he does have this to say about our Mystery vessel...“It was originally powered by Cooper Bessemer diesels but during our conversion these were replaced by UD 24’s. I am guessing this conversion occurred in the early 1950’s. I was always told that they could produce 250 H. P. My question is, was



side and outside of Ocracoke’s protected waters. On February 15 of that year “this role was deemed complete. The Commander-in-Chief, United State Fleet sent a letter to the Commander-in Chief, US Atlantic Fleet, stating that ‘it is desired that SC-449 be restored to its normal function and returned to the fleet’...Due to the absence of an operational need at this time.” In the next month, the mock-up flight deck was removed and the vessel transferred to the Amphibious Training Command, Little Creek, Virginia. Her original Submarine Chaser outfit was restored at a local shipyard in Norfolk, Virginia.

Her time with the Ocracoke Beach Jumpers was over and she spent the rest of her navy service in support of various commands along the east coast. It appears that unless you were on or very near Ocracoke Island for the three odd months SC-449 operated as a mock jeep carrier you would never see or know of her conversion. SC-449 survived until the mid seventies where sources indicate she was scrapped in 1974. Between her war service and demise, she operated for about 20 years as an entertainment and fishing vessel. I’m not

250 HP a realistic figure for a UD 24 in a marine application? I remember the engines were painted IH red and always marveled at how they started on gas and then switched to diesel. She served us very well with those 24’s for approx. 20 years before being donated to Texas A&M University for ocean research.” Better than that, he provides an image of the vessel as an “entertainment/fishing” boat.

The Mystery images that appear in WI, Vol. 44, No 4, are credited to the National Archives and their caption reads that they were discovered by Dave’s good friend and colleague Norman Friedman. In Christopher Wright’s revealing article in the next issue, the conversion photographs (and he publishes ten additional images) are credited as U.S. Navy Photo (National Archives) RG 19 Secret General Correspondence 1944, Box 181, File S-SC. I suspect Bill puts this box on his pull list the next time he visits College Park, Maryland.

So it wasn’t a Hollywood prop, Senator McCarthy did not roll over in his grave, loud noise was not involved, and no animals were hurt solving this mystery. We did determine that we had a large scale model, famous people were involved, and that the whole affair happened somewhat locally. I hope you enjoyed reading this essay as much as I did putting it together.

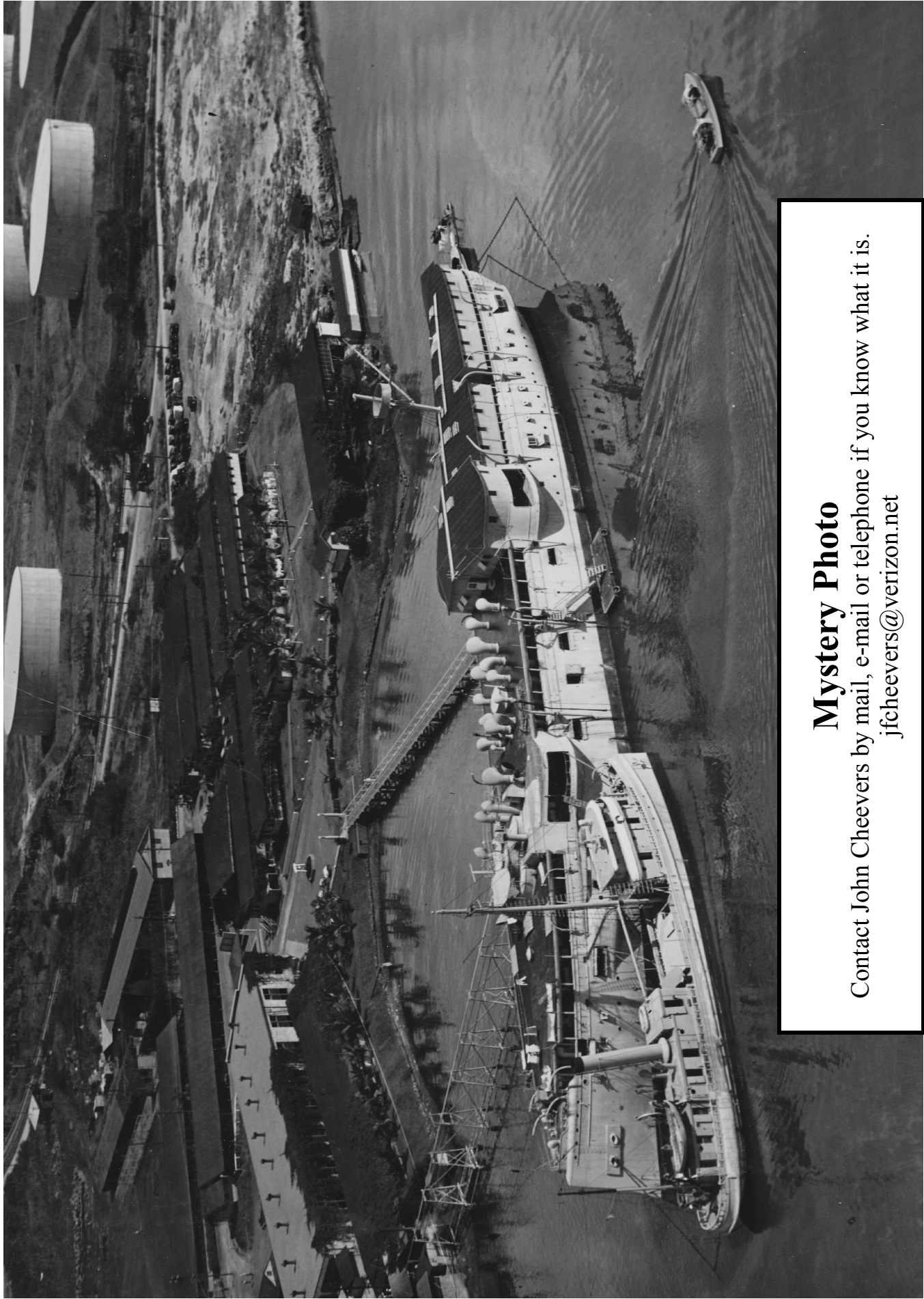
THE ANSWER

Mystery Photo 309

Photo Caption: SC 449 off Newport R.I. 10-44

Thanks to Dave Baker for this Picture

John Cheevers



Mystery Photo

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

jfcheevers@verizon.net

NOTABLE EVENTS

APRIL

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

MAY

- 12 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation: Building Plastic Models - Charles Landrum

JUNE

- 9 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation: Ryland Craze

JULY

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

AUGUST

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

SEPTEMBER

- 8 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting, Picnic, NN Park

OCTOBER

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

NOVEMBER

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

DECEMBER

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

JANUARY

- 12 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Nomination of officers,

FEBRUARY

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

**2012 Dues are now due.
Please see the Purser.**

**WATCH, QUARTER
AND
STATION BILL**



Skipper: Ryland Craze (804) 739-8804
Mate: Tim Wood (757) 481-6018
Purser: Eric Harfst (757) 221-8181
Clerk: Tom Saunders (757) 850-0580
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Webmaster: Greg Harrington (757) 930-4615
Chaplain: Alan Frazer (757) 867-7666

MINUTES



Hampton Roads Ship Model Society
Monthly Meeting
March 3, 2012
Mariners' Museum

The meeting was called to order by the Skipper, Ryland Craze at 1010 hours. There were no guests present. There were no corrections to the minutes as published. Eric Harfst gave the Purser's report and included the year-end accounting.

Old Business: The Skipper thanked the membership for their support at the IPMS show in Richmond. He noted that Gene Berger, Ulrich Guenther and Heinz Schiller won awards at the show. He passed around several supportive emails that he received from IPMS officials. The Skipper reminded everyone that the April meeting would be held on the 21st of April due to the Titanic program at the museum on the weekend of the 14th. The next item on the agenda was the banquet. Tom Saunders said that there might be a charge for the room if there is not sufficient participation and encouraged the members to attend. The Skipper said that past banquets had been a fun evening and reminded members to get their reservation forms to the Purser by the March 17th deadline. Tim Wood talked about the Founders Award and the candidates Bill Dangler and Ron Lewis. He asked the members to get their ballots to the Skipper by March 12th. The Skipper said that he had not contacted Len Wine about our library material. Tony Clayton circulated a sheet for members to sign up to give a presentation. The Skipper added his comments to Tony's request about how rewarding the giving of a presentation can be.

New Business: Tim Wood asked about creating a lifetime membership. After some discussion a motion was made, seconded and passed to form a committee to pursue the instigation of a lifetime membership. Tim Wood volunteered to chair the committee. Tony Clayton noted that Opsail 2012 would be in Norfolk in early June. The web site for further information is "opsail.org". Ron Lewis talked about events at the museum.

Show & Tell: Bob Moritz showed drywall-sanding screen that he uses to remove material from resin hulls. John Cheevers made the confession that he bought a plastic model kit at the IPMS show and that it was of an airplane. Tim Wood showed a Bluejacket Elco 80 PT boat kit from the IPMS show. Ryland Craze showed work on his Model Shipways longboat.

The meeting was adjourned to the presentation "The Oseberg Ship", by Tony Clayton.