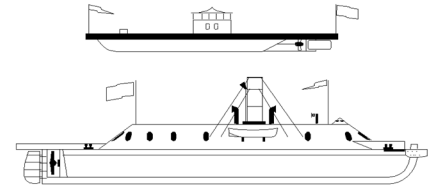


# Hampton Roads Ship Model Society Logbook!



No. 340

WWW.HRSMS.ORG

October, 2014

## From The Bridge



## Mystery Photo



Thanks to Bill Dangler our annual picnic went off without a hitch. Bill provided us with another fine day this year. Good food accompanied with good friends, I would call that a winning combination! I thank everyone that attended for the many fine dishes that were brought and I also thank Bill Dangler for being our “Grill Sergeant” again this year.

With summer behind us, the cooler days of fall have finally arrived. For me it's much more enjoyable to be in the garage making sawdust than it was in July. For many of us it's time to dust off the projects we shelved for the summer and get back into the groove of model building. I look to seeing everyone on Saturday and as always I encourage you to bring your latest work for show-n-tell.

Best Regards,  
Tim

## Reference Books

While trolling the web I came across several online reference books. The first is, [A treatise on masting ships and mast making](#), by John Fincham, published in 1843. The second, [A treatise on mast-making](#), by John Cock, published in 1840.

For those of us that are scratch building without a complete set of plans, these books provide a contemporary description of masts, spars and rigging in the mid-1800s.

The complete volumes can be found on Google Books.

Tom Saunders

**Bring your latest project  
to the meeting.**

## MEETING NOTICE

**Date:** Saturday October 11, 2014  
**Place:** Mariners' Museum  
**Time:** 1000 Hours

Let's just agree up front that there is no wrong answer this month. What with the forest of masts and stacks I imagine there might be as many as five vessels to choose from. There really is a sixth vessel there but I'll limit the field to five hoping that as many as three might be identified. Did we receive any instructions other than the standard call, “Do you know what it is”? I don't think so. So the path is clear in my mind that responders can choose freely from the field...or from the print in this case. And except for you long time cave dwellers, I think we can safely say there should be no argument over where this Mystery Photo was made, you should get it in a minute. Is that a hint or what?

Presented for your approval we have what appears to be a tug boat nicely framed by the photographer while she rests at a pier that she shares with a vessel from another era. The tug is traditional in arrangement and built in the American style for the ubiquitous tow boat. I should clarify “American style” a bit as the style has changed greatly in recent years. The classic American tug boat was long, full bodied, and narrow designed to push or pull along its longitudinal axis by means of a large engine driving a fixed propeller, or propellers, at the stern. This boat defines that style.

She is large for a tug. All along her eye-sweet shear, from the straight, vertical bow to the fantail stern we see the usual features, starting with three prominent rub rails along her hull. An anchor hawser pierces the bulwark forward and just above the top rub rail. If you look carefully you see the anchor davit that faces aft (the light gray line that appears at about a 45-degree angle to the horizontal). Below the lower rub rail you can see a skid plate that was added to safely guide the anchor past the lower rail and up to the hawser lips. Again if you look carefully, you can see the top of the bow towing chock and just aft of that you see the curved top to the companionway. Below the companionway you can see three port lights in the hull. This locates the crew's compartment for you. Moving aft we see the standard deckhouse topped by a combined bridge, radio room, and captain's cabin. Some of the detail is hidden by canvas awnings and dodgers. Atop this you see at least two curved ventilators and the trestle work for a deck awning. Then there is the single stack and aft we see one, possibly two ship's boats. A king post to lift them is secured to the aft mast and rigged for duty. The mast features a searchlight platform wrapped by a canvas dodger. Along the hull at the bulwark rail you can pick out four paired bits. The stern area is a clutter; it's too difficult

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(Continued from page 1)



Mystery Photo

to separate her features from the ship coming up astern. Going forward again you spot the foremast and can see how it stands proud of the bridge front. A crow's nest or lookout is fixed near its top. An unusual but practical feature is the extended bridge top which wraps around the foremast and forms the forward searchlight platform.

Behind the star of the month we see the three masts of a sailing ship. The standard square-rigged vessel flies the United States ensign from the mizzen gaff. What more do you need to narrow this ship's identity to two? Seems to me that the quick math yields either the USS Constitution or USS Constellation as the likely suspect. Does that also automatically reduce the suspect port locations to two? A companionway raises to her waist bulwark. Just below you can see the upper half of a split gun port. It is open with its half-moon cutout turned up for luck. Behind this ship you see the rather small, thin stack of ship number three raked to the left with two right facing ventilators, and behind that you see a large stack of ship number four raked to the right. If you can't identify them, at least you can tell me and the good reader which way the vessels point. Below the thin stack is a slant roofed, white sided shed featuring an open window. And just to the right of that there might be a right slanted, fifth smoke stack.

Vessel number six is the least likely to be identified. Framed nicely between the rattled stays of our tug's main mast and the falls of the port boat boom you see a smoke stack raked to the left. (Perhaps I shouldn't say "rattled stays" as I don't think her main stays are rattled in the traditional way we see in the vessel across the pier. Maybe "rung-stays" would be a better descriptive as the horizontal bits are really blocks of material fastened to the stays to form rungs for climbing.) Her bridge might be visible in the framed triangle as well but the rest of her



is lost among all the stern clutter of our star vessel, or it actually is the clutter. And, finally, just for kicks, if you look closely at the pier between our tug and the sailing ship you will see a 1920's era automobile; just the right thing for providing a decent timeline.

Only two members accepted the challenge of this Mystery. They happen to be our regular players John Wyld and Dave Baker and eventually they arrived at the same conclusion, but it took them a while. John facetiously begins his reply by saying that "this is one of the simplest MPs we have had in a long time. So I'll get right to the answer: USS CONSTITUTION. Location: (again, simple) Boston Navy Yard. Ship in background: USS BRIDGEPORT AD-10 and receiving ship USS SOUTHERY IX-26...I have to say to the submitter, it would have been even easier if you had used a shot without that pesky auxiliary unit in front...[but] Just for the fun of it, I thought I'd try to identify [it]." OK! Dave, as always, is the more pragmatic one: "I'm probably last in line for identifying this ship, but she's the auxiliary tug U.S.S. WANDANK, AT 26, a unit of the BAGADUCE (AT 20-39) class." I say eventually because even though they lead their responses with these quoted sentences, they continued their replies with a lot of salubrious rambling. Just kidding!!! If you're a counting man, right out of the box they tenuously identified four of the six vessels on offer.

Possible identifications all around, possible acknowledgement that the star of the month is the "pesky auxiliary unit". Both men get it (you'll see where John does bring it home later). So, short of formal naval documentation, why is this vessel important? What does she offer to the great timeline of history?

I thought about that last question and used it as the basis for my research. Like John, I had a pretty good idea that the tug boat was photographed in Boston, or more appropriately, Charlestown while she shared a pier with the more famous Constitution. That turned out to be the case, but my Google search got me there in an odd way—it produced an image of a similar vessel engaged in an epic at-sea rescue. John's path was equally circuitous: "My first thought upon seeing the large booms on the stern was 'submarine rescue vessel' - obviously one of the first since it appears to be of early 20th century vintage. I had the thought that if it was an ASR, and in view of the



## Nautical Term

Windjammer: A late-XIX century sailing ship, usually a square-rigger. The word is believed to be newsmen's jargon, and was rarely heard from deepwater sailors.

Submitted by, Tim Wood

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Mystery Photo

location of the photo, I immediately wondered if it might be a vessel that was involved in the salvage of the SQUALUS SS -192. Some backstory here: being from New England originally and because my Dad worked at EB for thirty years, I was well familiar with the story of the sinking and later salvage of SQUALUS in 1939 off the Rhode Island coastline.”

“Off to the trusty Navsource.org website. I was rather rudely awakened to the fact that the foreground vessel - which I now shall call MP2 - was not an ASR after looking through all the appropriate listings and reviewing the pix. So I went back to the beginning and did a Google search for USS CONSTITUTION 1930 where I immediately came up with the first two attachments above. My hopes soared when I saw a reference to USS GREBE, a LAPWING Class AM (Minesweeper) that towed CONSTITUTION during her three year rock star tour after her public-funded 1927 rehab / rebuilding. Photos of GREBE were very close in shape and size, including the funky mast hard in front of the pilot house. But, alas, it was clear to me that even though the MP2 vessel sits tantalizingly close to Old Ironsides in the photo, MP2 is not GREBE.

During at least an hour of fruitless searching I came up with another tantalizing photo - attachment 3 - of USS MOJAVE, AT-15. It appears at first to be the same shot as the original MP but is clearly not MP2. Looking carefully at the MOJAVE picture, on the very right is the stem of another vessel which looks for all the world to be the very same MP2. The caption only identifies MOJAVE and CONSTITUTION c. 1924, unfortunately. Feces!”

Ain't this fun!?! Reading John's response you can see where he abandoned his initial idea and only returned to it after finding the MP in the record. Read on...

“But I did notice two somethings on the stem of the out of the frame vessel. I realized later that those somethings might

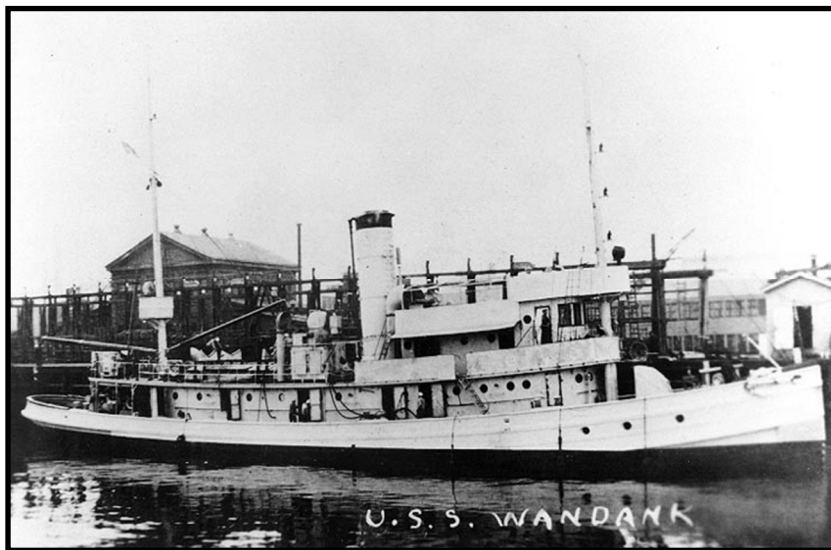


Photo #NH 83839 USS Wandank, circa 1920s or 1930s

be mounting points for a stem fender, which might well mean MP2 was a tug after all. Referring to attachment 1 above, by the way, shows a very dark tug where MOJAVE was photographed in the "c.1924" photo so MOJAVE was not in that berth on the day the MP was shot. It would seem that MP2 had stuck around the BNY for a number of years from "c.1924" to "c. 1926 - 7", possibly in the same berth. Close again, but no "Mark On Top" as we used to call when flying directly over a target contact in a P-3.

So, one more time, I went back to the pictures of Fleet Tugs and this time looked at every freaking one. Previously I had 'sampled' a few to see if I could get the hull and deckhouse shapes that were close to the MP with a particular class, then hopefully home in on a specific vessel.

Finally, pay dirt with USS WANDANK, AT-26. Same photo as the MP - NH 43681. Laid down and launched in 1919 as USS WANDANK (Fleet Tug #26, redesign AT-26 in 1920). (I could riff on the name a bit, but this is long enough already.) Interestingly enough, as subsequent navsource photos of her show, she was in fact involved in the crew's rescue (with the first use of the rescue chamber from USS FALCON) and salvage of the USS SQUALUS in 1939 (see attachment 4, photo NH 57508).”

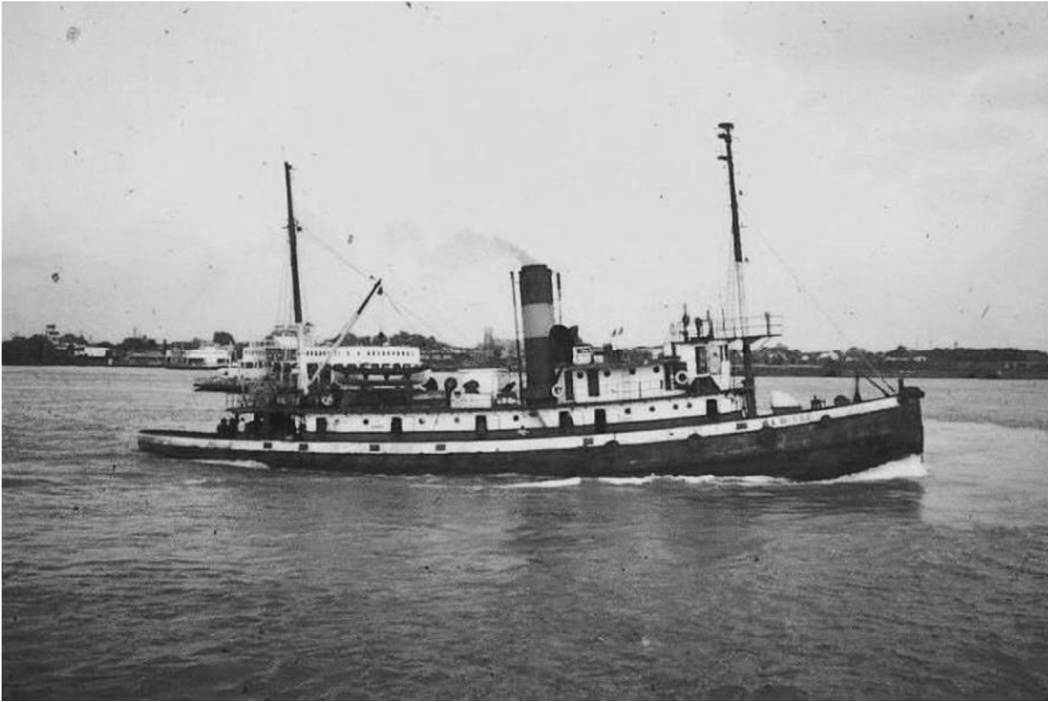
I'm not from New England but as I said my Google search produced a thumbnail image of what I initially took to be a tug but what actually was the USS Falcon a former Bird-class minesweeper that was now a submarine rescue ship. From a distance she looked a lot like the tug in our Mystery Photo. I chased down that rabbit hole a bit because, as I also said earlier, this vessel must have been involved in something BIG. And I was rewarded. In one of the images of Falcon I found another, slightly smaller vessel that was a dead ringer for our MP, and she was involved in the Squalus rescue/salvage at the time. My experience was the old blind squirrel getting the nut scenario....but who's complaining.

Dave doesn't mention how he arrived at the correct identification, but I assume that with his knowledge and experience he just took the appropriate reference and it



Photo # NH57508 Falcon & Wandank over the sunken USS Squalis during recovery operations, May 1939

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Mystery Photo

immediately fell open to the correct page. He does provide the peculiarities for Wandank:

“The ship was 156-ft. 8-in. overall (149-ft. 3 3/4th-in. pp) 30-ft. beam x 14-ft. 7-in. max. draft and displaced and "estimated" 1,000 tons as of 1920. She could make 13 kts and burned oil fuel (of which she could carry 279 cubic ft. in her tanks). The ship had one vertical, triple-expansion steam engine with cylinders of 33.5, 55.5, and 42-in. diameters and had two boilers. The ship's engine produced 1,800 ihp. Total weight of the machinery was 307 tons. She also had two 10 kw, 125-volt Westinghouse generator sets.

Her crew in 1920 was five officers, three chief petty officers, and 17 other enlisted personnel. Built by Ferguson Steel & Iron Co., at Buffalo, New York, she was laid down on 7 April 1919, launched on 21 October 1919, and commissioned on 23 March 1920. The BAGADUCE class was authorized to carry two 3-in. 50-cal. AA guns, but WANDANK didn't carry any armament until WW II, when she was armed (in 1945) with four single 20-mm AA Oerlikons in Mk 10 mounts and -- oddly -- two Mk 6 depth charge mortars.”

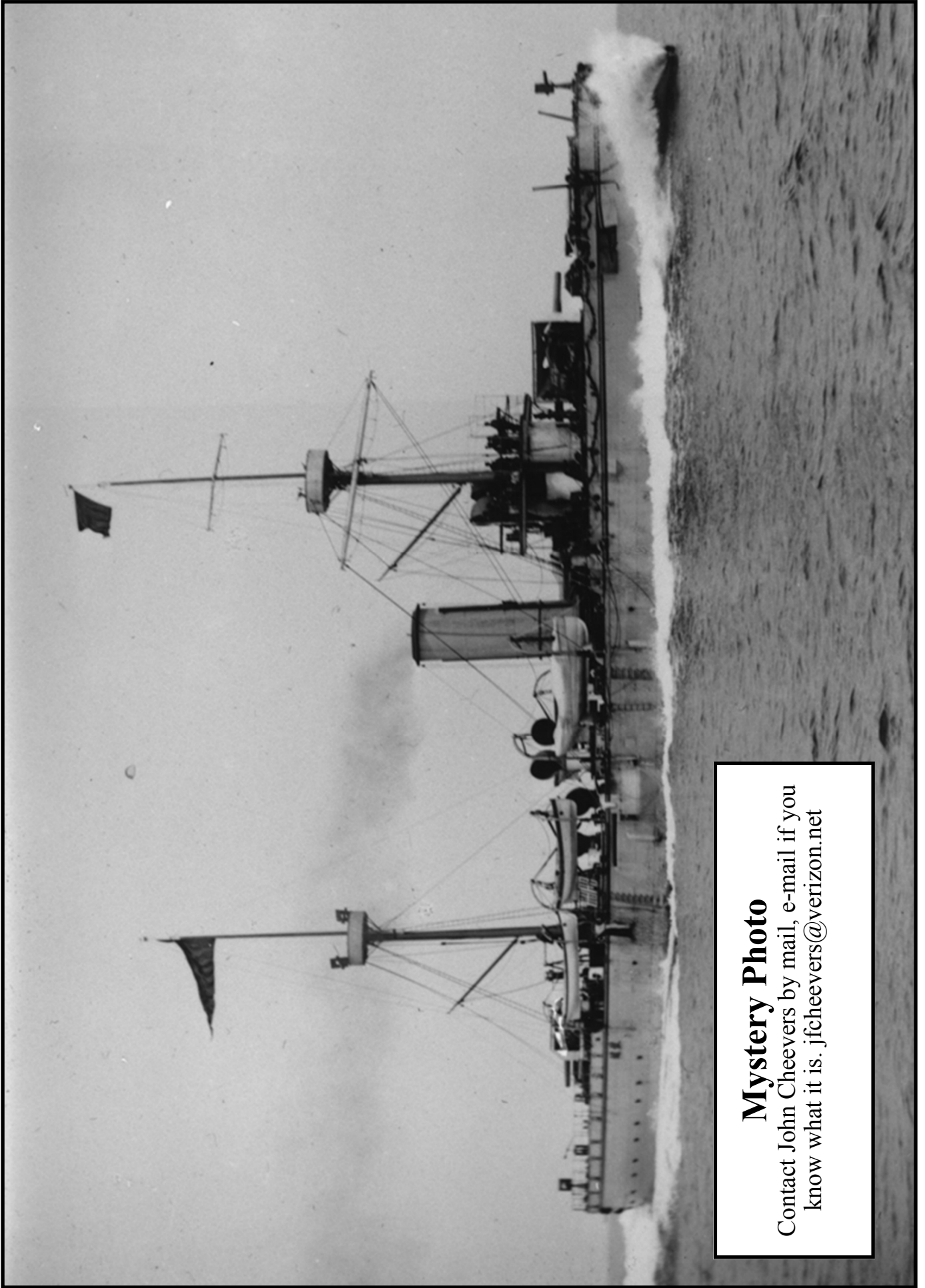
With the main identification out of the way, how does John know the identification of some of the bit players in our

MP? Easy...by studying related, captioned images. He doesn't mention anything other than Navsource.org as his source and you can actually wind your way through that sites photographic image web to find the images he mentions. I recommend it, and if you do so you will learn that the vessel he identifies as USS Bridgeport is the large stack slanted to the right and that the narrow stack slanted to the left is none other than USS Southery. I don't expect that you'd make your identification any other way. John does provide an image he calls "attachment 5" which clearly shows the vessels behind Constitution. It also provides proof that the white, slant roofed shed is actually a structure build on Constitution's main deck. Also it reveals an additional tug tied the pier just forward of Wandank. That tug is identified as USS Iwana and I'm willing to bet

(Continued on page 6)

"Any damn fool can navigate the world sober. It takes a really good sailor to do it drunk." - Sir Francis Chichester





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

## NOTABLE EVENTS

### OCTOBER

- 11 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Presentation: "Card Modeling:, Dave Baker  
16-18 NRG Conference, St. Louis, Mo.

### NOVEMBER

- 8 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Presentation, Charles Landrum

### DECEMBER

- 14 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

### JANUARY

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

### FEBRUARY

- 14 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Election of officers

### MARCH

- 14 HRSMS Monthly Meeting:

### APRIL

- 11 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum  
Presentation:

### MAY

- 9 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

### JUNE

- 13 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

### JULY

- 12 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

### AUGUST

- 11 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

### SEPTEMBER

- 12 HRSMS Monthly Meeting,  
19 Talk Like a Pirate Day

"You are not going to find the ideal boat. You are not even going to have it if you design it from scratch."

Carl Lane

## WATCH, QUARTER AND STATION BILL



Skipper: Tim Wood (757) 481-6018  
Mate: Bob Moritz (804) 779-3365  
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

## MINUTES



The Skipper, Tim Wood called the meeting to order at 1100 hours, welcomed everyone to the picnic and promptly adjourned the meeting.

*(Continued from page 4)*



Mystery Photo

she is the tug, vessel number six, that is rounding Wandank's stern in our MP. Ship number five will remain a mysterious tug boat.

How about the timeline? I mention the car on the pier as a good indicator of our MP's timeline and that fact was not lost on John Wyld: "...Time frame c. 1926 - 7 according to captions on photos referenced below - note cars on pier"; or Dave: "The photo, per the caption on NAVSOURCE, was taken at the Boston Navy Yard in the early 1920s; I'd put it at around 8 May 1922, on which date she'd been recommissioned from a short period in reserve; the steel bulkhead at the forward end of the 01 deck, with a curved wind deflector, was not original equipment." This is all close enough for me.

If you are or are not familiar with the story of the sinking, rescue, and salvage of Squalus, I suggest you check into it. John has done so and says "The story is recounted in the book "The Terrible Hours", by Peter Maas, which I highly recommend. As an historical note, the Navy decided that SQUALUS was salvageable, and times being what they were as the war clouds brewed, they decided to recommission her after the repairs. To put lipstick on the pig, they renamed her USS SAILFISH, SS-192, though she was referred to by many thereafter as USS SQUAILFISH. No disrespect intended to the 26 crew members who lost their lives in the sinking, this was some gallows humor within the sub force at the time. USS SAILFISH completed eleven war patrols in WWII and returned home."

Finally, if you think that Wandank sailed into the sunset after the Squalus salvage, think again. Dave offers Paul Harvey's page two: "The ship initially operated mostly out of Norfolk until transferred to Boston on 8 October 1940. Her type designation was changed to ATO 26 on 15 May 1944 (ATO meant Auxiliary Tug, Old). The ship was decommissioned on 20 September 1946 and stricken on 13 November 1946, after which she was transferred to the Maritime Commission on 17 July 1947; she was then sold to the W.A. Bisso Towboat Co. of New Orleans and served them as the W.A. BISSO until retired in 1971 -- probably the last of her class."

John Cheevers

## THE ANSWER

The answer to Mystery Photo 339  
USS Wandank  
Photo # NH 43681, Boston Navy Yard, circa the 1920s

Thanks to Tim Wood for this submission.