

From The Bridge



Mystery Photo



I hope all of you had a wonderful holiday season with friends and family, I also hope “Santa” brought everything on your ship modeling wish list!

We are now into a new year, with the beginning of our annual club activities for 2015. A few of those activities, which come to mind are, the annual auction, banquet and Founders Award. I understand many of our members’ have been busy already. John has a growing stack of modeling paraphernalia for the auction, the award committee has been at work discussing nominees for the founders’ award and last but not least, Tom started his search for the perfect banquet location before the beginning of December. I will also include some of our non club events which many of you enjoy attending: IPMS show at the Richmond Fair Grounds, Cabin Fever at York, PA and the NRG Conference at Mystic, CT. I encourage you to attend as many as you can, it’s a great opportunity to learn from others.

I look to seeing everyone on Saturday and as always I encourage you to bring your new Christmas gifts and your latest work for show-n-tell.

Best Regards,
Tim

The first thing I notice about this MP is the direction of the wind. Now I know that all you land lubbers out there never really consider the direction of the wind, it’s largely irrelevant to your daily activities, unless you’re blowing leaves. For an engine powered vessel, the criticality of wind direction is greatly reduced, but for those who rely on the stuff for motive power it is vital to know, at a minimum, its direction. In fact, it might be the first lesson taught to those learning to sail a vessel. But for this engine powered vessel, the best reason to know wind direction might be to keep the smoke out of the Captain’s face. For our Mystery Photo the direction might be more esoteric. How do you read the wind in this image?

Judging from the response to this image I would suggest, divine wind or not, that we suspend the Mystery Photo in all future Decembers. What with all the Holiday preparation (preparation H (?)), travel, drinking, visiting, and general malaise everyone must have forgotten to visit NavSource.com or any comparable nautical reference to at least try and identify the species of the month! If you are a bird watcher, double nuggies on you.

Aside from the errant wind direction, we have a vessel presenting the standard (for the time) tugboat profile: a flush deck sweeping up in a high sheer forward, a single deckhouse surmounted by a pilot house, a single stack, two masts in this case, and the open fantail stern. Where it differs is in the forward gun emplacements and the big boom aft. Those of you with a sharp eye and clear head will note the similarities with MP #339.

In the teens of the last century, the US Navy possessed a number of near-identical vessels to handle several divergent duties—minesweeping, salvage vessels, seaplane tenders, submarine rescue vessels, and sea-going tugs. There were quite a few of these vessels floating around, forty eight to be exact; enough to make easy identification a bit difficult. Since they were all built as minesweepers and since they were all named for fowl, they were known as the Bird-class. They were employed heavily in clearing mines in the North Sea following the Great War.

One of these ships achieved a degree of notoriety seldom enjoyed by non-capital warships: USS Falcon most easily comes to mind as she led the rescue/salvage of the sunken submarine USS Squalus in 1939. That rescue attempt brought a young navy officer, Charles “Swede” Momsen to the forefront and introduced a stunned populous to The McCann Rescue Chamber which saved 33 members of the submarine’s crew.

(Continued on page 2)

Presenters Needed

**Program presenters are needed for 2015
Contact Tony Clayton
if you are willing to give a presentation.**

Bob Moritz-Home Demo

The demo at Bob’s on January 24th will begin at 1000 hours. Lunch will be provided. Contact Bob for directions.
4429 Hopewell Road, New Kent, VA 23124
(804) 779-3365
BOBMORITZ@aol.com

MEETING NOTICE

Date: Saturday January 10, 2015
Place: Mariners’ Museum
Time: 1000 Hours

(Continued from page 1)



Mystery Photo

Our Mystery vessel is not the Falcon, but you sharp eyed Bird watchers might have made the connection and found her listed as number nine in the series of minesweepers. Our ship is known as USS Finch, AM-9 or “a small or moderate-sized singing bird” to all you Ornithologists.

From DANFS we find that she was laid down “22 August 1917 [at] the Standard Shipbuilding Co., New York, NY” and “launched 30 March 1918.” A moderately sized vessel for her type she displaced 950 tons, was 187’ 10” long, 35’ 6” in width, and drew 9’ 10”. Her speed was 14 knots, she carried a crew of 72, and she mounted 2 3-inch guns forward. Her power was supplied by two Babcock and Wilcox boilers driving one triple expansion reciprocating steam engine on one shaft.

“After training and operations with a submarine bell, Finch sailed from New York 9 August 1919 for Kirkwall, Orkney Islands, Scotland. Here she based for 2 months of duty removing the vast number of mines laid in the North Sea during World War I. Finch returned to Charleston 29 November 1920, and on 3 January 1920 sailed for San Pedro, Calif., where from 1 March to 29 August she was in reduced commission. Modern-

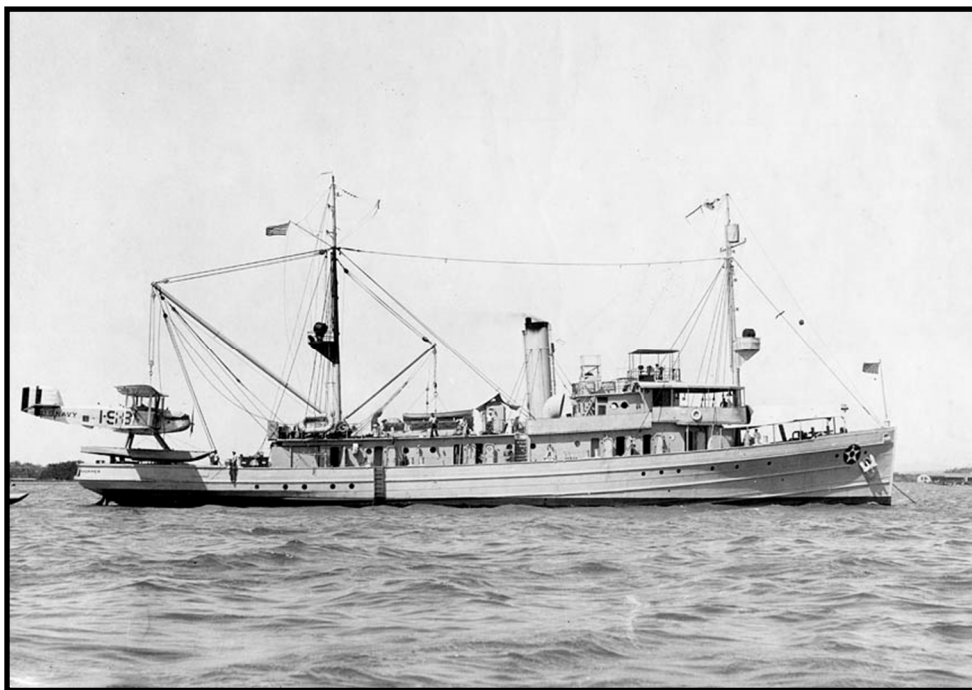


ized, she sailed from San Francisco 20 August 1921 for duty with the Asiatic Fleet, and for the next 20 years served in the Philippines in the winter and out of the China base at Chefoo in the summer. Her duties were varied, and included towing and salvage work, as well as participation in the Yangtze River Patrol. She joined in fleet exercises and as war tension heightened, played a part in protecting American citizens and interests in the Far East.”

At the beginning of hostilities with the Empire of Japan Finch found herself wintering in the Philippines when she was damaged by a near miss from Japanese bomb while at Corregidor. Her seams opened and bomb fragments pierced her hull. Finch was abandoned and allowed to sink on 10 April 1942. She was struck from the navy register 8 May 1942. She was gone and forgotten, and her name was subsequently reassigned to Destroyer Escort #328.

Now when it comes to knowing which way the wind is blowing, we find that this is not the end of story. One of the ironies of war is that when the smoke clears sometimes there are prizes to be had. Finch was one such prize. The Imperial Japanese Navy salvaged Finch, repaired her hull and systems and she served throughout the war as IJN PTROL Boat No. 103. One last irony holds that No. 103 was sunk by United States carrier based aircraft while on convoy escort duty off Cape Padaran, Indochina on 12 January 1945.

Finch received one battle star for World War II service.



USS Sandpiper (AM-5) on 29 March 1926

John Cheevers

Nautical Term

Dead Reckoning: A procedure of navigation, using course, speed, and drift data estimates. The term is believed simply to be a corruption of deduced reckoning.

Submitted by, Tim Wood

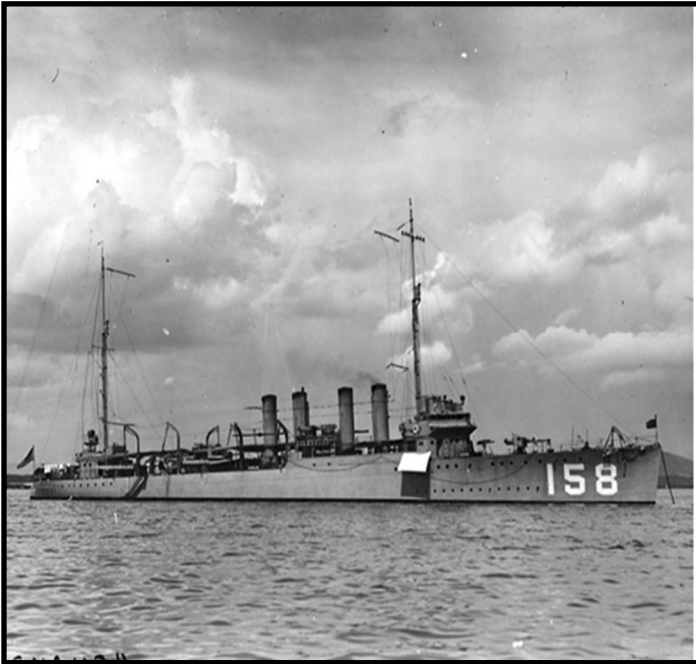
THE ANSWER

Mystery Photo 342
USS Finch
10 January 1939. Tsingtao Harbor, China.

The Tale of the Scale

Some of you know that I own a tool or two. It's not a terribly impressive collection as few of the tools have any serious collector value. But they are not there to be seen, they are there to be used so most are chosen with great care to be part of my "kit". What most of you may not know is that some of my tools have very important and sentimental meaning attached to them. For instance, I have a 1" micrometer that my grandpa promised me when I completed my Apprenticeship. It came from his tool box and he used it when he was a mechanic. I have a small black handled awl that I like to use when laying out parts in metal. It belonged to Joe McCleary for a short time. We both spied it at a used tool show but he fished it out of the "dollar" box just as I was making my move on it. He's gone now and Helen gave it to me. There are others in the kit but I think you see where this is going.

Bill Clarke likes to say that I am a collector of scales. Not the fish kind or the kind used to weigh illegal substances, but the kind with useful linear measurement. It is written that



USS Leary anchored in Guantanamo Bay

"Measurement scales are used to categorize and/or quantify variables." Sounds reasonable, and true, the theory of measurement certainly bears witness to the idea! I have quite a few different scales in my tool kit and they all have a specific designed use. One type in particular is best categorized as the machinist's scale. I don't have many of them, maybe no more than ten, but they represent a nice cross section of what is available for the type.

Two months ago I received a phone call from my brother letting me know that the corner barber, the barber that all the neighborhood kids went to for years, had just died. We knew him for cutting hair, coaching one of the local high school football teams, and just being a good guy. We looked up to him.

His name is Jim Mountain and he was big like his name in a lot of ways to our neighborhood gang. We always knew him as "Jim the barber" and sort of took it for granted that he would always be there for us. His shop offered an informal hangout—the comic books were good and it offered the only spot of air-conditioning for miles around on a hot day. In later years, he played us all in chess and regularly beat us at the game as we honed our skill. What we didn't realize as kids was that a lot of us would grow up, move away from there, and lose contact with Jim the barber.

As I was preparing to move to Virginia to start my big experiment in ship building, I happened to stop by to say goodbye to him. We got to talking about how it was when our gang hung around and played and such. And he recalled how when we were younger we played army (The network show Combat was number one with my generation as our fathers were all in the service during WWII) and one day attacked the barber shop as if it was an enemy pillbox. He said there he was cutting some fellows hair when the screen door was flung open and in came a plastic grenade. It was followed shortly by a man-made explosion sound and one of us charging through the door firing his toy machine gun. He said we thought it was great fun but I'm sure the customer might have thought otherwise. It was a strong memory to hold.

Well, the conversation came back to my leaving and what I was going to do and so forth. As I was starting to leave, he said that he had something for me and he felt I should have it as I was the only one from the gang who had the desire to build things. He gave me my very first machinist's scale. He was a bit cagey as to why he had it and I guess I assumed he just picked it up somewhere. But there it was, a nice Starrett 6" machinist scale graduated on one edge in hundreds of the inch. Wow, I was making 1:1200 scale waterline ship models at the time and here was a scale that matched that effort exactly. I'm proud to say that it has been a workhorse in my modeling and my shop for almost 40 years.

It was while reading his obituary that I realized why Jim might have had the scale. You see, he was like a lot of WWII vets—he never really talked about his time in the war, or much else other than sports and what was pertinent to us while we sat in the "chair". Let me share with you a little about this guy as he was much more than just the "owner/operator of his barber shop." "Jim was a graduate of Dayton High School and attended Xavier University and Villa Madonna College (Thomas Moore College). He coached football at both Dayton and Highlands High Schools for a span of 55 years. He won a Kentucky State Football Championship in 1949 with Dayton and four State Football Championships with Highlands. He is a member of the Northern Kentucky Sports Hall of Fame." A pretty impressive record in its own right!

But it is his wartime service that gets my attention. He "served in WWII in the Navy as a torpedoman's mate third class". That just happened to be the same rate my dad held during his wartime service. Only where dad served on the destroyer tender *USS Sierra*, Jim served on a destroyer, the *USS Leary*, DD-158. *Leary*, as you might can tell from the low serial number, was an old riveted four piper left over from round one of

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)



the Great War. It's not clear when Jim entered into naval service, but my guess is he went down to the draft board with a whole lot of other like-minded guys just after Pearl Harbor. He found himself in the US navy assigned to the *Leary*.

Lest you think that the *Leary* he served in was the classic four-piper, think again. At the time of Jim's service, the destroyer was heavily converted, optimized really, to deal with



escort duty and combating German U-boats. A photo from 1942 shows her external modifications. And it's her WWII service that I'm interested in. According to DANFS, "...In September 1939 destroyers *Leary* and *Hamilton* (DD-141) established a continuous antisubmarine patrol off the lower New England coast. The following year her patrol functions enlarged and 9 September 1941 she began a series of hazardous escort missions

to Iceland. On 19 November *Leary* became the first American ship to make radar contact with a U-boat. After 26 February 1942 she spent a year escorting convoys from the midocean meeting point to various Icelandic ports.

Leary departed this duty 7 February 1943 for Boston and a new area of service. Emerging from drydock the old four-stacker departed Boston 1 March for Guantanamo Naval Base where she engaged in antisubmarine exercises with *R-5* before resuming escort duty, guarding four convoys to Trinidad, British West Indies, between mid-march and mid-June 1943. She returned to New York 25 June.

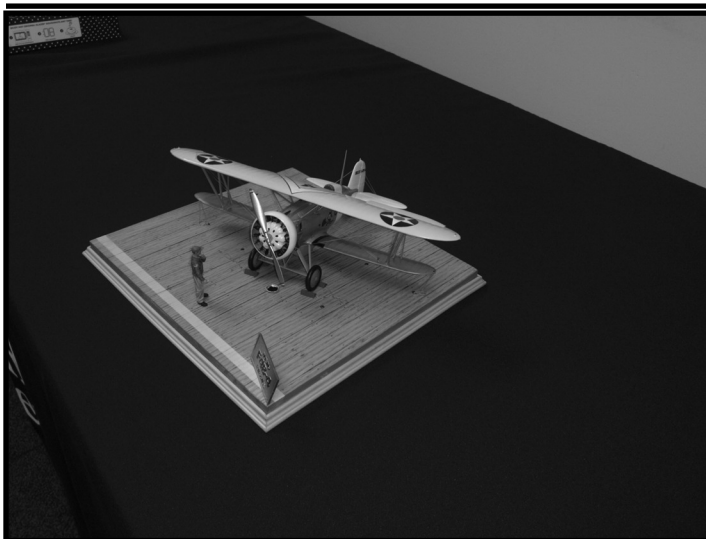
Leary now began transatlantic escort voyages to guard ever-increasing amounts of supplies from the United States to the Mediterranean. She picked up a convoy off New York harbor 7 July, sailed first to Aruba, Dutch West Indies, and then across to Algiers, arriving the 31st. A return convoy using the same route entered New York 27 August. A second voyage concluded 30 October but *Leary* would not return from her third transatlantic assignment of 1943.

Late in November she departed the East Coast with escort carrier *Card* (CVE 11) on a hunter-killer operation. Early in the mid-watch 24 December, *Leary* suddenly found herself in the midst of a German submarine pack. *Leary* took two torpedoes within minutes of her discovery of the enemy and a third torpedo finally sank this valiant ship. Ninety-seven members of the ship's company were lost, including her commanding officer, Comdr. James E. Kyes." The obit says that Jim "was one of 60 survivors."

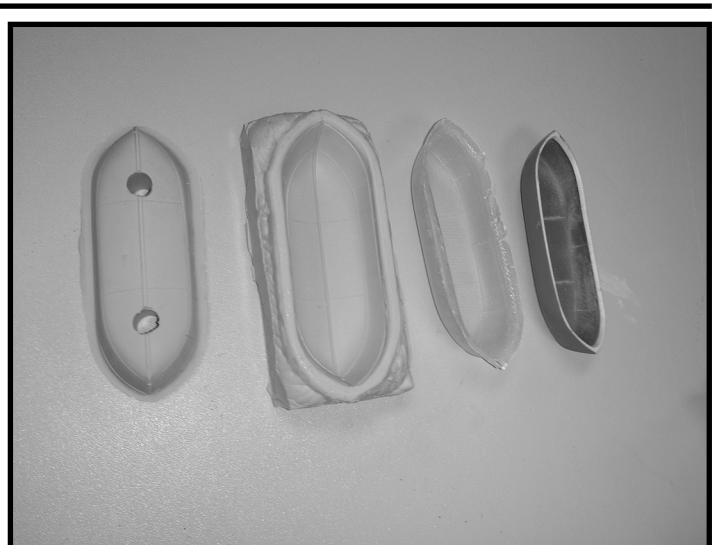
Jim lived to be 93 and in a lot of ways remained an enigma as he was not one to boast and brag. He was, however, a role model for a lot of young boys and his shop was an anchoring point for a neighborhood gang. I never forgot to stop by whenever I went home and continued to until he closed the shop several years

I'm proud to own that scale and if you look very closely at its face you still see where he scribed his last name, "Mountain". Perhaps I need to retire the tool and mount it on a plinth along with the scale torpedo that my dad made while he was on the *Sierra*.

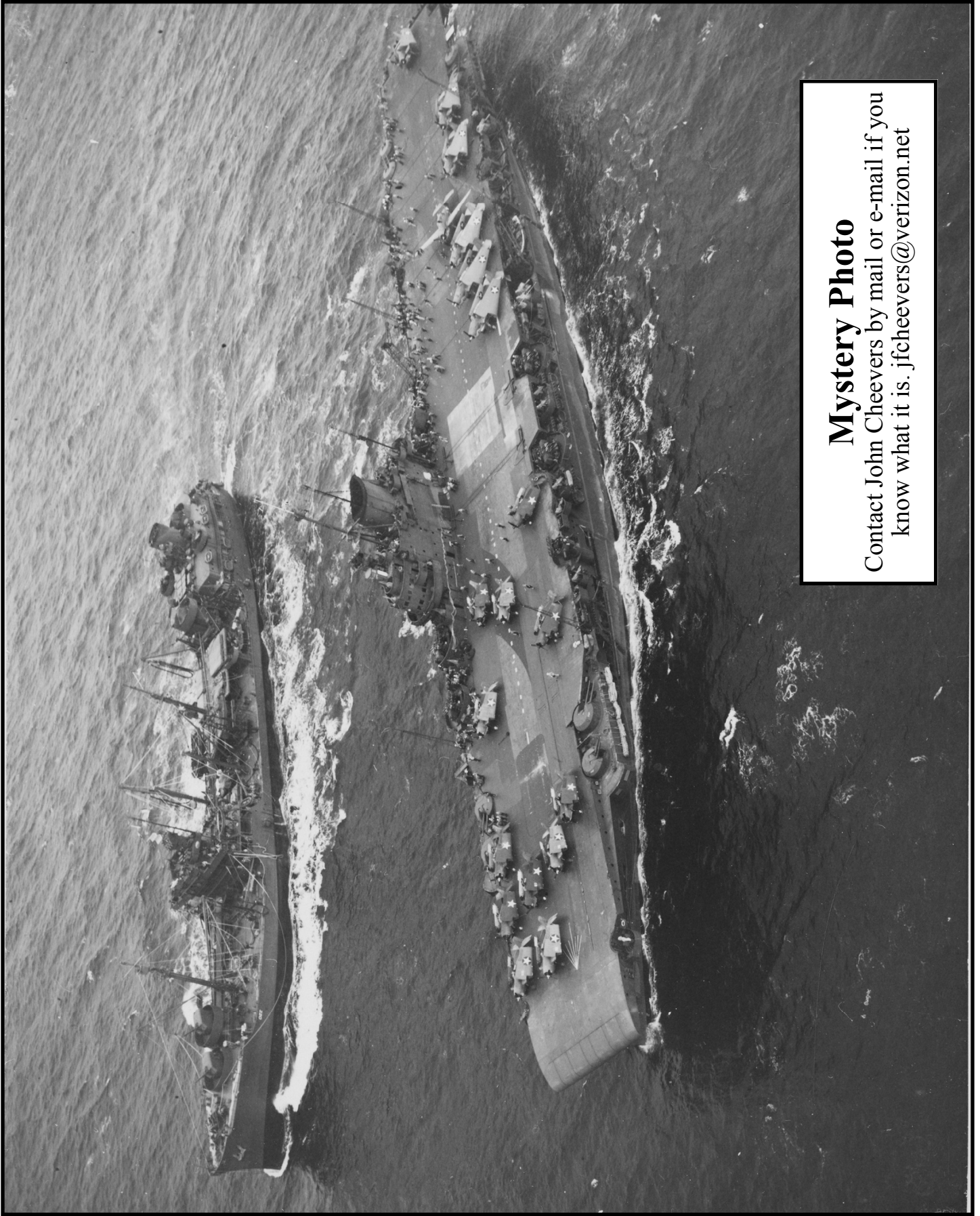
John Cheevers



Marty Gromovsky's F4B-4 Fighter



Gene Berger's Mold and Lifeboats



Mystery Photo

Contact John Cheevers by mail or e-mail if you know what it is. jfcheevers@verizon.net

NOTABLE EVENTS

JANUARY

- 10 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Nomination of officers,
24 Workshop/Demo—Bob Moritz 10:00 am

FEBRUARY

- 14 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Election of officers
28 IPMS Old Dominion Open, Richmond, Va.

MARCH

- 14 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Auction, Norge Hall

APRIL

- 4 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation: Tim Wood, TBA
10-12 Cabin Fever Expo, York, Pa.

MAY

- 9 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation: "Conservation vs Restoration", Ron Lewis

JUNE

- 13 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation: John Cheevers, TBA

JULY

- 12 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation: Tim Wood, TBA

AUGUST

- 11 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

SEPTEMBER

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

OCTOBER

- 10 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation:
22-24 NRG Conference Mystic Ct.

NOVEMBER

- 14 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

DECEMBER

- 12 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation,

MINUTES



Hampton Roads Ship Model Society
Monthly Meeting
Mariners' Museum
December 13, 2014

Guests John Cork, 3rd meeting
Brad Robinson, 3rd meeting

The meeting was called to order by the Skipper at 1003 hours. The guests were recognized and it was noted that it was their 3rd meeting. After their indication that they wanted to join the HRSMS, they were asked to leave the room while a vote was taken. John and Brad returned new members. There was no correction to the minutes. The Purser and Web Master were not in attendance.

Old Business: The Skipper said that he was looking for the Purser to have him disperse a check for our awards sponsorship at the IPMS Old Dominion Open. Bob Moritz reminded everyone of demonstration to be held at his house on January 24th. The demonstration will start at 1000 hours. Ryland Craze talked about the Lifeboats for Warriors Project. He circulated a brochure on this project and gave details of the event to be held in April. The models will be sold and the proceeds going to support veterans' groups. Bill Dangler said that the picnic shelter has been reserved for the September 12th picnic.

New Business: Bill Clarke noted a conflict with our April meeting date and after discussion a vote was taken to move the April meeting to the 1st Saturday of the month. The Skipper asked Tom Saunders if he had contacted any restaurants as an alternative to the Riverwalk for our annual banquet. Tom said that he had not. This issue will be discussed and decided on at the January meeting. The Skipper appointed Ryland Craze as chairman of the Founders Award Committee with Tony Clayton and Bill Dangler as members.

A late-arriving Eric Harfst gave the Purser's report. Eric talked about the format for taking funds at the March auction.

Show & Tell: Dave Baker showed a sample copy of Warship International and the book Warships of the Great War Era, by David Hobbs. Tom Saunders said that Tony Clayton need to fill the schedule of presenters in 2015. John Cheevers showed his carved hull of the sardine carrier *William Underwood*. Gene Berger showed the mold and casting of a lifeboat for his United States. Gene stated that he intends to put RC in the lifeboat. Marty Gromovsky showed a model of a Boeing F4B-4 fighter, mounted on a section of the *Saratoga* deck. A Model Shipways Constitution with a coppered bottom was shown by a member whose name was not recorded (fire the Clerk). Tony Clayton showed the book *The History of Ships* and a print of the photograph contained on the end papers of the book. Stewart Winn showed a crystal paperweight with a Viking ship inside.

The meeting was adjourned to the presentation "Billy Moore – Chesapeake Boat Builder", by Tony Clayton.

**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
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