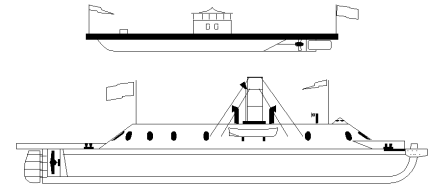


Hampton Roads Ship Model Society Logbook!

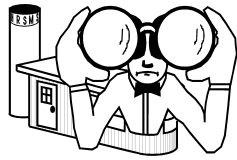


No. 366

WWW.HRSMS.ORG

December, 2016

From The Bridge



Hope everyone had a good and safe Thanksgiving. Lots of good turkey and deserts. This month's meeting will be the last for 2016 and another year will be gone. Soon we will be planning New Years, food and all the party's. Make it a safe one. Lets make 2017 a better year by building more or completing what we have started and bringing them in for show 'n tell.

December's meeting should be an enjoyable one with good friends and a good demo. See you all there.

Please keep bringing in the models you are working on. Good or bad.

Enjoy the LogBook.

Bob Moritz
El Capitan

MEETING NOTICE

Date: Saturday December 10, 2016

Place: Mariners' Museum

Time: 1000 Hours

**Get you models ready
for the
HRSMS 50th Anniversary
exhibition**

Presenters Needed for 2017

Contact Tony Clayton

Mystery Photo



I hate to do this to you all but I find I'm forced to continue with the apolitical morass—If only to abase the imbecilic rantings of the great unwashed and uneducated...no sanctuary for us. Fanning the flames is easy! Anybody can pour gas on a fire. It's knowing how to keep from getting burned and burning down the entire neighborhood where the real skill comes in. The opening line for this month's MP essay could easily read: "Don't shoot we're Republicans!" In truth it should. And unlike a lot of the American public enjoying their five minutes of flame, ship modeler's need to maintain their decorum. After all, you are a cut above average in intelligence and enlightenment, so I'm sure you will fully grasp the proper historical context of this opening statement. Maybe I better explain anyway.

This month's Mystery Photo is both easy to get and hard to get. Easy in the sense that most of you will recognize a Fletcher—class destroyer at a glance, and hard in the sense that picking the correct one from the pool of 175 or so might be a bit tough. I'm not going to walk the deck as I usually do since the important stuff is easy to see and you can count the men on board. The camouflage paint scheme is measure 22 and I initially mistook the tears at the bottom of the print for seagulls.

"Don't shoot were Republicans."

Three replies this month—four, really, if you count a reply Dave Baker got to his inquiry and forwarded on. As luck would have it, we received a fifth one as a late reply arrived from Tim Wood. He offers a glimpse at a way to sort out this photograph, so we'll start there: "...She is one in the family of Fletcher Class Destroyers." He adds: "The editor did a good job covering the hull number and the ships name on the stern, which means there's lots of computer and reference book time to be spent on cracking this one!" Since it sometimes happens that way, he questions: "Why would you choose this ship as photo of the month?" He lists why in these four questions "Outstanding war record, most decorated?" His search yielded 18 ships, no winner.

"Last/first ship of its class?" His search yielded 2 ships, no winner

"Museum ship?" His search yielded 4 ships, no winner

"Sunk as a result of battle damage?" His search yielded 19 ships and, finally, a winner.

A total of 43 out of 175, or 25 percent of the class. That's a lot of looking but it's what you do.

In addition to all this, we received reams of material from John Wyld, a note from Fred Olsen, and a reply to Dave from his buddy, Rick Davis. As I said, there are 175 chances to get it right but these guys managed to narrow the field to just 2.

Letting new player Fred Olsen play, we find

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

that he agrees with Tim's narrowing of the field to the Fletcher-class. "Yes, I know the "what it is" picture portrayed in the November Log issue. I spent a number of years on the *USS John Hood* DD655, a "Fletcher" class destroyer. I know intimately the characteristics of that class destroyer. Nice picture." And he's right, it is a nice picture! Close on Fred's heels is Dave with this opening line: "The mystery photo shows DD 579 WILLIAM D. PORTER in San Francisco Bay during July 1943 at the time of her acceptance by the USN. Alas, I cannot claim credit for the I.D.; since my FLETCHER photos are on loan to Venner Milewski (a Mariners' volunteer) for a book he's doing..." Finally, we have Wyld. We'll, or maybe you'll, get Wyld in a minute.



Mystery Photo

Without a sheath of photos to study, Dave took his cue from the MP itself: "The clue (which I actually had figured out) is the configuration of the outboard side of the waist twin 40-mm mounts, which had railings rather than a solid bulwark on only those FLETCHERS built by Consolidated." And he asked the right person..."I turned to my friend Rick Davis, who has to be the world's leading expert on FLETCHER-class destroyers and their many configurations... Rick just dug into his files and got the answer back to me in about half an hour."

I took Dave's clue and applied it to my copy of Paul Silverstone's book *U.S. Warships of World War II* and was able to reduce the candidates from 175 to just 12 hulls—Navy numbers 569 through 580. Armed with this information, we could have sorted out the 12 using [NavSource](#) in a very short amount of time—like Tim did. But since we had Tim's clue as well we can combine clues and quickly narrow the field to just one hull as only one of the Consolidated build ships was lost in the war. After all that you can see why Dave is correct in finishing his reply with, "That said, anyone who can figure out that this is DD 579 without expert help has my sincere admiration. This is a really hard one."

"Don't shoot were Republicans."

William D. Porter might just well go down in US Naval history as the Sad Sack of all U.S. Navy Destroyers. Articles detailing her career have sentences that read: "This WWII naval

(Continued on page 3)

AMERICAN NAVAL HISTORY 1803

May 12: Off Tripoli, the frigate *John Adams*, captures the Tripolitan ship *Meshuda*, without resistance as she attempts to slip into port under the Moroccan flag.

May 23: David Porter leads a party of 50 men from the frigate *New York*, ashore to destroy a dozen Tripolitan feluccas drawn up on the beach 35 miles west of the city. Porter men fought a sharp action with the felucca crews and retires having suffered 15 casualties.

June 22: The frigate *John Adams* engages the Tripolitan polacre anchored near shore several miles west of Tripoli. After the action, the Tripolitans abandon their ship, which blows up before the *John Adams* crew reach her.

August 26: Only two days after entering the Mediterranean, the frigate *Philadelphia*, captures the Moroccan ship *Mirboha*, with an American prize (the brig *Celia*) in tow near Cape de Gata, Spain.

September 13: Preble reaches the Mediterranean in the frigate *Constitution* in command of the third squadron. With him are three other frigates and three schooners.

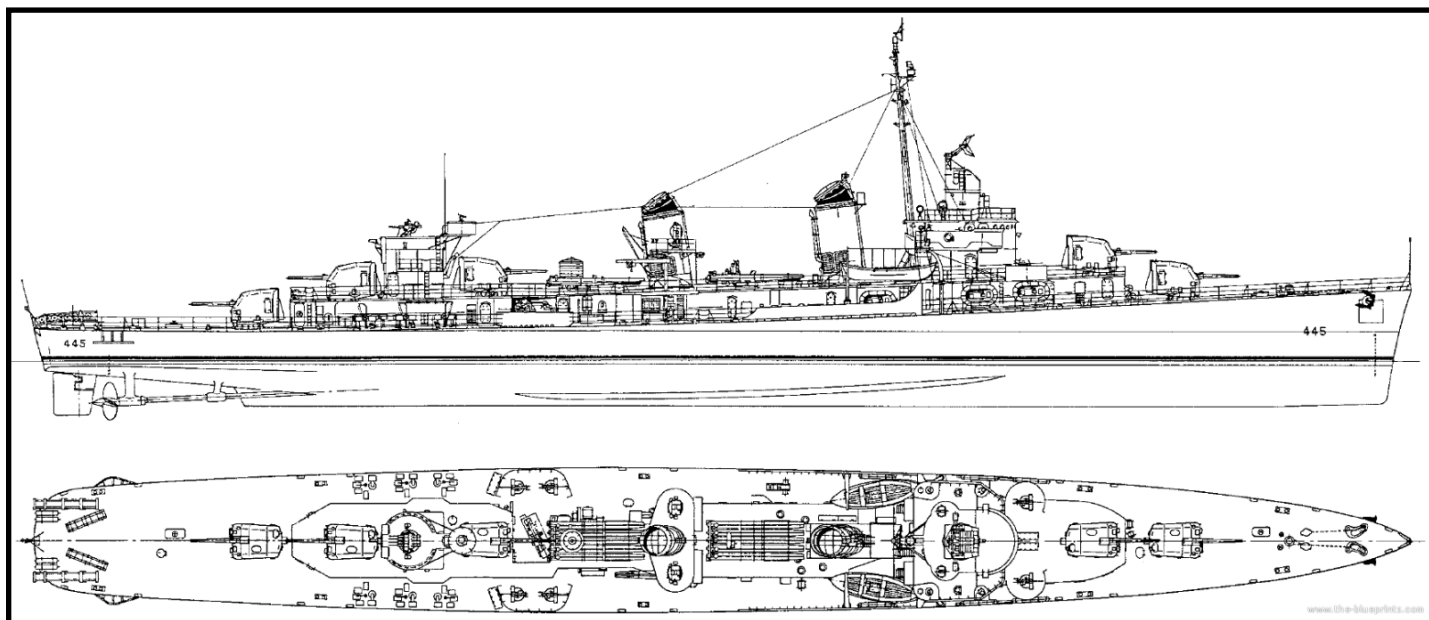
October 12: Peace with Morocco. The original treaty of 1787 is ratified by the Sultan of Morocco, Mulai Suleiman.

October 31: The frigate *Philadelphia* is captured by Tripolitan gunboats.

December 23: The schooner *Enterprise* captures the Tripolitan ketch *Mastico*. The ship is taken into the U.S. Navy under the name *Intrepid*.

1803 Ends with no further actions.

Bob Moritz



(Continued from page 2)



Mystery Photo

ship was so unlucky, it almost killed FDR.”, and “The *USS William D. Porter* was a source of mayhem during its whole existence...”, or the one that Tim provides: “she is known as the ‘Unluckiest

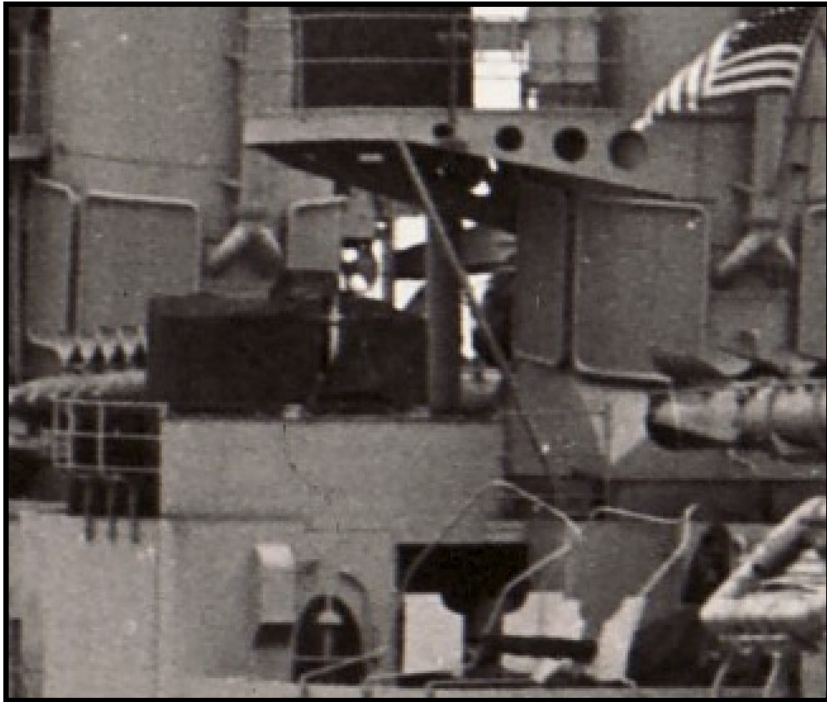
large annotated printout of his source data due to computer related issues. So the story that follows covers remarks from his notes or is quoted from his printout, the bulk of which comes from the web site [Task and Purpose.com](http://TaskandPurpose.com).

“Don’t shoot were Republicans” just happens to be another clever remark attributed to the *USS William D. Porter* and we find it in John’s printout. It has nothing to do with the current political tension but it is a good natured chide and seems to fit the times. I don’t suppose it would diffuse modern tensions quite like it did in 1943 to 1945 when “those who greeted the ship’s crew often used the line” when greeting the hapless and trigger happy bunch. We better start at the beginning.

“The *USS William D. Porter* — “Willie Dee” to her crew — was a War World II destroyer, and is arguably the unluckiest ship in the history of the world. She lasted less than two years, until her ill-fated demise in June of 1945.” Following her commissioning on 6 July 1943 and working up with units of the Atlantic Fleet *William D. Porter* departed Norfolk, VA in November of that year to rendezvous with *USS Iowa*. An incident while “departing Norfolk when the anchor tore the railing and lifeboat mounts off a docked sister destroyer” seems to be her first documented mishap and signals the start to an often repeated pattern of careless actions.

Navy lore says that a ship is the sum of its crew and that the head of the crew is the Captain. A crew is either good or bad depending on the Captain; they are a reflection of him. Captains like to think that but, in reality, it’s the Chief of the boat owns and runs the damn thing. Nevertheless, “*USS William D. Porter* was commissioned on July 6th 1943 under the command of Lt. Cmdr. Wilfred A. Walter. In November of 1943, she was ordered to accompany the battleship *Iowa* on a secret mission across the Atlantic that the crew of the *Porter* was told nothing about. The crew members quickly learned its tasks and purposes before setting sail, but clearly wasn’t ready for its upcoming mission.”

According to DANFS, in four short days, while Lt. Cmdr. Walter was Captain, chaos ensued. *William. D.*



USS William D. Porter midships mount, July 43

ship in the navy’ ...And that is another story!” Since this is starting to sound like Allstate selling Farmers’ insurance, we better get to the John Wyld offering.

John Wyld says he had every good intention of crafting his usual clever reply but was forced to provide a



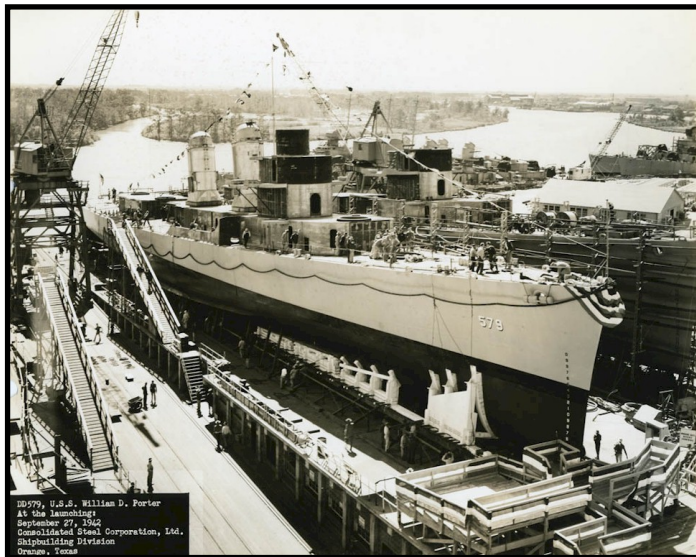
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Mystery Photo

Porter departed Norfolk on 12 November as part of a four ship convoy and trouble began immediately. According to TaskandPurpose.com, 24 hours into the cruise while “under strict orders to maintain radio silence” as the area was “suspected to contain German U-boats...there was a massive explosion that shook (nerves mostly) the entire fleet. All of the ships immediately began anti-submarine maneuvering. The chaos continued until Walter admitted that a depth charge had fallen off of the stern of the ship. The safety on the charge had mistakenly not been set, and when it crashed into the rough sea, it detonated.”

“Soon after accidentally detonating a depth charge, a huge wave smashed into the William D. Porter — thus stripping it of everything that wasn’t tied down — and a man was washed overboard, never to be seen again. As a result of the wave, the engine room lost power in one of its boilers. The mission, which had demanded total silence, turned into an hourly reporting fiasco from Walter to the Iowa.



DD579, U.S.S. William D. Porter
At Sea Launching
September 27, 1942
General Dynamics Corporation, Ltd.
Shipbuilding Division
Orlando, Texas

USS William D Porter Launching

“On Nov. 14th, 1943, the four ships were east of Bermuda when the president wanted to test the defenses of the Iowa in the event that they came under an air attack. The crew of the Iowa launched weather balloons to simulate anti-aircraft targets, and fired over 100 guns. In command of the William D. Porter, Walter, wanting to join in on the fun and redeem himself for the Willie Dee’s earlier episodes, sent his men to their battle stations.

Willie Dee’s crew started shooting at the Iowa’s missed balloons that had drifted toward their ship. Down below on the torpedo mounts, the crew was preparing to take practice shots at the Iowa — which was 6,000 yards away. During live torpedo drills, primers, or small explosive charges, are removed for practice, but one of the torpedomen forgot to remove the primer from one of the torpedo tubes. Just as the torpedo officer ordered the fake firing command, a successfully armed and launched torpedo whizzed across the sea, straight toward the Iowa — endangering some of the world’s most influential figures, including Roosevelt.

According to Bonner, a prominent historian who has



USS Dunlap DD-384 firing a practice torpedo

studied the Porter, “the next five minutes aboard the Willie Dee were pandemonium.” The crew ran around yelling conflicting orders, and tried to think of the best way to contact the Iowa under their stringent orders of silence. They attempted flashing light signals (indicated in the wrong direction, of course) and then signaled a full speed reverse.

The William D. Porter finally decided that it was necessary to break the mandatory silence, and notified the Iowa in the nick of time. When Roosevelt heard that a torpedo was zooming toward him, he asked to be moved with his wheelchair over to the railing so that he could see it. Fearing an assassination plot, the Iowa turned its guns toward the William D. Porter — however, the crisis ended when the torpedo finally detonated as it struck heavy waves created by the Iowa’s increased speed. Walter reportedly answered with a meek “We did it” when pressed. The entire crew was placed under arrest and sent to Bermuda to face trial — the first instance in U.S. Naval history that the entire crew of a ship had been arrested.

One of the torpedomen, Lawton Dawson, confessed to having accidentally left the primer in the torpedo tube and attempting to conceal the evidence by throwing the primer off the side of the ship. The inquiry proved that the situation was mere-

(Continued on page 5)

Nautical Term

Bollocks (also Bullock Blocks) Blocks on the topmast of a square-rigger, through which the topsail tyes were rove. The origin of the term is not known.

Tim Wood

THE ANSWER

The answer to mystery photo 365:
U.S. Navy Yard, S.C., September 24, 1943.
U.S.S. Porter (DD 579) . Port Quarter
File 9-24-43-4.

(Continued from page 4)



Mystery Photo

ly a string of unfortunate events and the information was not released to the public. Dawson was sentenced to 14 years of hard labor, and the rest of the crew's careers were to be ended — but Roosevelt intervened, asking that no punishments be levied on the crew for the series of accidents.”



Taking off the crew of the sinking USS William D. Porter

The destroyer arrived in Bermuda on 16 November. If you didn't pick up on it, the mission of this little convoy was to transport President of the United States Franklin Delano Roosevelt to the Cairo, Egypt and Tehran, Iran Conferences—sort of a big deal. And one Sad Sack destroyer sure made the trip entertaining. As instructed, *William D. Porter* turned over her escort duties to another destroyer on the far side of the Atlantic and returned to Bermuda. DANFS states that *William D. Porter* received a new Captain on 14 November 1943 (some sources say the change took place on 30 May 1944). I wonder if the date is a typo and it should be some later day in November or maybe the 1944 date. Regardless, I'm typing that CDR Charles Melville Keyes assumed command on in November, 1943 and took the ship to the Pacific, and trouble continued to plague the warship—you are free to fact check and correct this. Trouble apparently did not continue to follow Captain Walter who reportedly ascended to the rank of Rear admiral—it pays to shoot at the President's ride.

William D. Porter “was eventually reassigned to the Aleutian Islands in the northern Pacific.” Her duties consisted of relatively simple patrol missions and escort duties in and around the islands. “Before being reassigned to a different area in the Pacific, however — the *William D. Porter* accidentally shot a five-inch artillery shell which landed on the

commandant's front yard on the American base in the islands.”

The destroyer was eventually “assigned to Okinawa, Japan, and finally did a fine job destroying many different Japanese aircraft ... oh, and three American aircraft. Those who greeted the ship's crew often joked, “Don't shoot, we're Republicans!” On June 10, 1945, the ship ran out of any luck it ever possessed. When a fully-loaded kamikaze plane — a Japanese bomber constructed mostly from canvas and wood — snuck into U.S. airspace, it attempted to crash into a ship near the *William D. Porter*. However, at the last moment, it veered away and crashed alongside. The plane sunk, but still managed to explode underneath of the ill-fated destroyer. This tore open the ship's hull and caused the ship to sink. In a final twist of much-deserved luck — all of the crew survived.”

A most fortunate ship, indeed!

One last nit: Dave's reply has this statement: “...in San Francisco Bay during July 1943 at the time of her acceptance by the USN.” I have to wonder about that remark. The destroyer was built in Texas and migrated to Norfolk to accept her first assignment. It seems that *William D. Porter* did not arrive at San Francisco until sometime in August or September of 1944. There is an entry in DANFS that says she “stood out of San Francisco on 27 September.” If the image is of our destroyer in San Francisco, it has to be on this date and not in 1943. The captions with our MP image state this: “DD-579 William D. Porter at Delivery (July 1943)” and “as completed by Consolidated Steel Corp., Orange, TX.” Do we see the ship in the Sabine River?

John Cheevers

(Continued from page 8)



did not want to use it he would take it home. Ron then noted that the museum's logo had been changed to include the park and is now “The Mariners' Museum and Park”.

Show & Tell: Greg Harrington showed the progress on his Portuguese river cargo boat. Dennis Hobbs showed his Model Shipways *HMS Bounty* Launch. He noted “laser cut does not mean laser fit”. Ryland Craze showed a small kit given away by the San Diego Ship Model Guild, 1/32 thick carving blanks from Syren Ship Model and a Bluejacket J-24 kit. Stewart Winn showed his finished Model Shipways *Essex* and talked about having the case made. Bruce Brown showed his finished *Bluenose* and talked about the problems working with a Dumas kit. Marty Gromovsky showed the progress on his schooner *Clara E. Randall*. Hank Ghittino talked about Polynesian navigation, his visit to see the *Hokulea* and the maritime art exhibit at the Muscarelle Museum of Art.

The meeting was adjourned to a presentation on the NRG Conference by Ryland Craze.



Stewart Winn's Essex



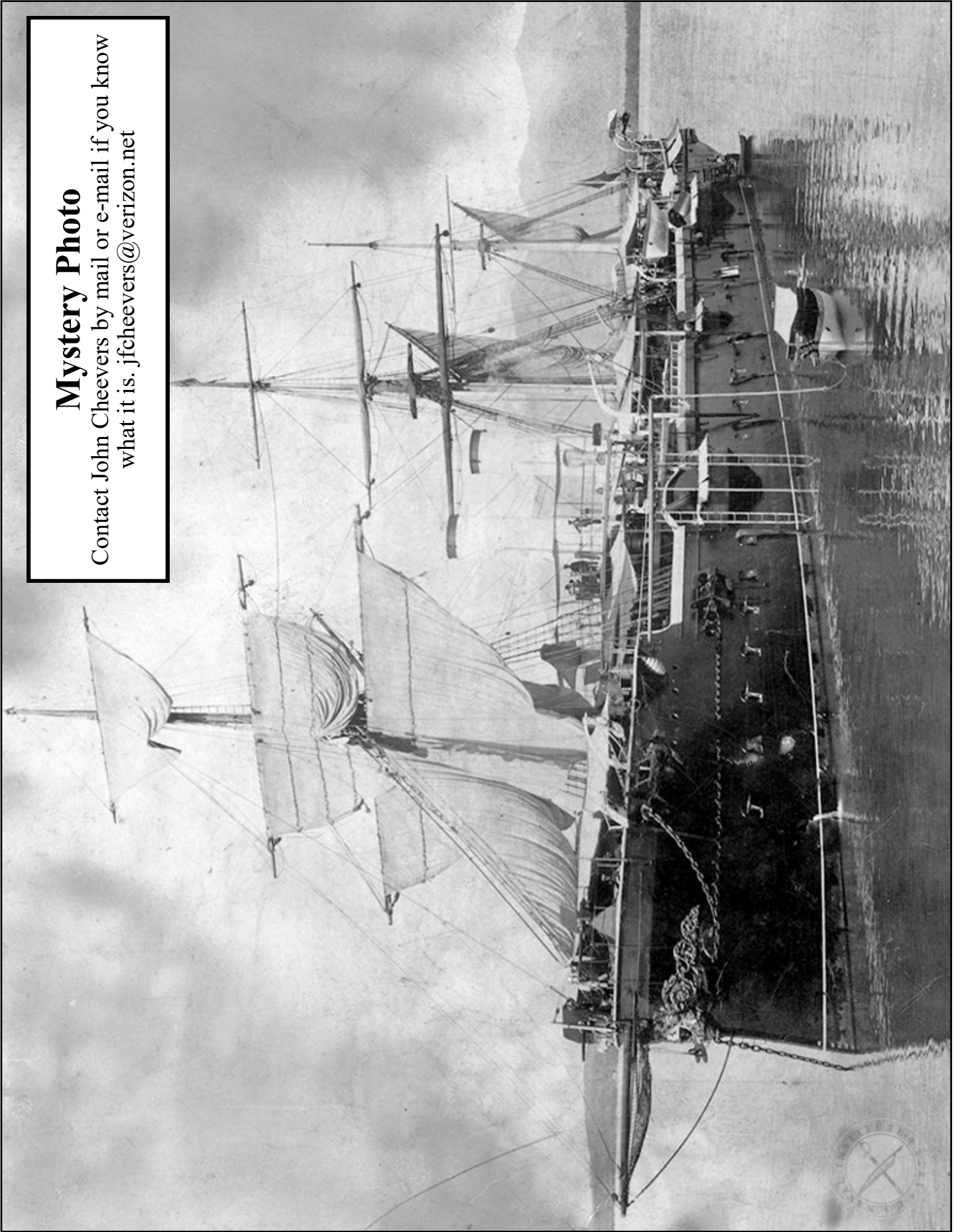
Dennis Hobbs's HMS Bounty Launch



Marty Gromovsky's Clara E Randall

Mystery Photo

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



NOTABLE EVENTS

DECEMBER

- 10 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation: George Livingston, TBA

JANUARY

- 13-15 Cabin Fever Expo, Lebanon, Pa
14 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation, Tony Clayton, SS Savannah, Etcetera
Nomination of officers,

FEBRUARY

- 11 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation, Round Table
Election of officers
25 IPMS Old Dominion Open, Richmond, Va.

MARCH

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

APRIL

- 8 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation, Tom Matthews, Bicycles + Battleships = ?

MAY

- 13 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation, Bill Fox The James River: Boats and Steam
boats

JUNE

- 10 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation: Ron Lewis, AC 35 (w/AC50s)

JULY

- 8 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation, John Cheevers, Carving the Chine Hull

AUGUST

- 12 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation, Greg Harrington, Building the Clue & Chata

SEPTEMBER

- 9 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting
19 Talk Like a Pirate Day

OCTOBER

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

**WATCH, QUARTER
AND
STATION BILL**



Skipper: Bob Moritz (804) 779-3365
Mate: Gene Berger
Purser: Ryland Craze (804) 739-8804
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
Photographer: Marty Gromovsky

MINUTES



Hampton Roads Ship Model society
Monthly Meeting
November 12, 2016
Mariners' Museum

Guests: Jeremy Marcotte, 1st meeting
Joe Querido, 2nd meeting
Jim Tarantino, 1st meeting

The meeting was called to order by the mate, Gene Berger at 1011 hours. Gene welcomed the guests and had them tell a little about themselves. There was no correction to the minutes as published.

Old Business: There was discussion about the memorial plaque for Alan Frazer to be placed in the model builders' stand. Tim said that work on this item would progress as soon as his computer was back on line. Gene digressed and called for the Purser's report. Ryland Craze gave a three month cumulative report detailing receipts, expenditures and account balance. Greg Harrington gave the Webmaster's report. Greg reported that he added a kit review page to our web site and reminded everyone of the login procedure. Ryland Craze talked about the IPMS Old Dominion Open and our participation. Gene raised the issue of the costs for Logbook distribution. There was discussion about going to an electronic version only. Tom Saunders said that he was currently mailing approximately 23 copies each month. After discussion, it was decided to limit hard copy distribution of the Logbook to those members who do not have electronic access. (Note: The December issue of the Logbook will be the last hardcopy edition except to those members that do not have an email address. If there is a compelling need to have the hardcopy, please contact Tom Saunders.)

New Business: Gene Burger reported on his discussions with museum staff pertaining to our 50th anniversary exhibit. Gene also talked plans the museum is developing for its expansion and the changes to the museum layout. It was noted that construction of the new steamship gallery would commence in December and that members needed to remove their material by that time. Bill Altice volunteered to store David Tagg's model that is currently in the closet behind the model builder's stand. This progressed to a lengthy discussion on the museum's plans and the 50th anniversary exhibit. Gene proposed the museum's president Howard Hoege as an honorary member. After some discussion a second to Gene's motion was made and it was carried by a vote of the membership. Gene then circulated two lists. The first was for those who would be able to support the documentation of models in the Great Hall of Steam and the second, for a 50th anniversary selection team. The next item for discussion was the March banquet. Greg said that he would contact the Warwick Yacht Club and bring information to the December meeting. Tony Clayton noted that the round table discussions slated for the February meeting need two more participants. John Cheevers stepped up to the plate and offered to do a table on planking. Ron Lewis talked about the visit of the Polynesian double-hulled voyaging canoe, Hokulea. Ron then asked about his seamless photo backdrop saying if the members

(Continued on page 5)