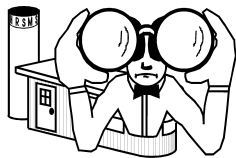


From The Bridge



Mystery Photo



Captain's Log 8.12.17

Last week's opening of the HRSMS 50th Anniversary Exhibit at the Mariners' Museum can only be described as triumphant. The momentous occasion of the club's special anniversary was a culmination of detailed planning, hard work, and perseverance. I applaud everyone involved in the project and especially those who shared their models for the display. There is nothing I can imagine that would eclipse this celebration. Everybody at the museum was extremely complimentary of our creations and participation. I declare this a success.

You may now return to your regularly scheduled programming!

Gene, SD

Way back in Mystery Photo No. 303 we featured an image of the static battleship evocation *USS Recruit*. Its purpose was to excite the boys into joining the navy to experience the lifestyle, the travel, and to man the decks—to be sailors. Her job was to also sell war bonds. *Recruit* was built and commissioned in 1917 and looked like the period ships she represented—that is key. In 1949 the US Navy commissioned another *USS Recruit* (TDE-1) to serve as a training ship. Styled to resemble a *Dealey*-class destroyer escort, she also looked like the period ships she represented. In 1982 she was refurbished to resemble the *Perry*-class frigates. The redo had the same mission, she was just updated for the times. Are you beginning to see a pattern here? This Month's Mystery Photo runs somewhat in the same vein.

Recruitment and training are important operations that ensure a constant supply of able young seamen to man the rails. The training aspect is vitally important to ensure these men can do the job they're recruited for. However, when the job becomes extremely difficult and the skill level goes through the roof, it's essential that the right training tools are developed. If your eyes and memory are good, you'll see the object in this mystery for what it is. If not, then you'll see something else. I say this because of one of this month's replies. That reply can only be paraphrased because it came in the form of a phone call and I couldn't promise the caller that I would do his comments due diligence.

In essence the caller thought the image featured a ship in the building dock, covered in scaffolding. He was not sure of the vessel but he was sure you could see keel blocks, twin turrets, and a fair amount of superstructure. I guess other things like the extreme narrowness of the fore-body, the dirt pile, and the fact that the object appears to show only from the waterline up didn't faze him. It fazed me.

Tim wood replied as well. He found the object on the Internet hiding in plain sight. "This month's mystery photo was

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Hampton Roads Ship Model Society Picnic

Saturday September 9, 2016

Newport News Park

11:00 am, until. The event will be held rain or shine.

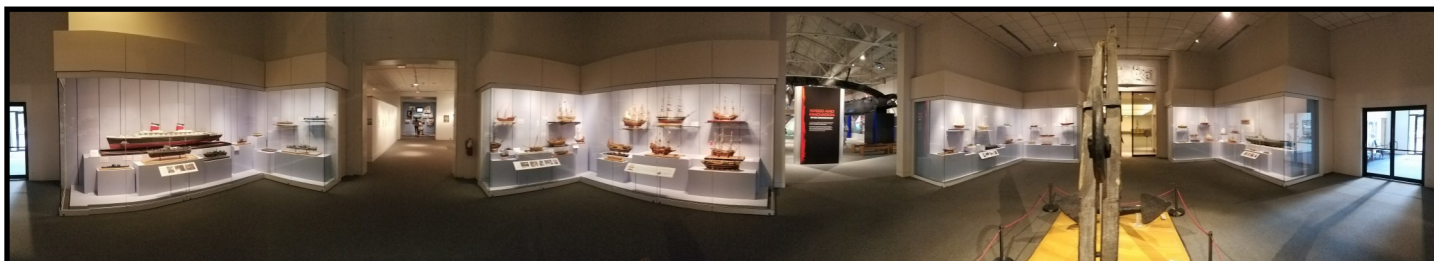
MEETING NOTICE

Date: Saturday August 12, 2017

Place: Mariners' Museum

Time: 1000 Hours

Panoramic View of the HRSMS Exhibit



What's Happening at The Museum

Well, the Dollar Days of summer plan is working like a charm. Attendance in the museum is up, up, up! We are welcoming 600 to 800 visitors a day compared to the 120 to 150 per day in a typical month! Now, for the artists in the Model Shop, that means forget about getting any work done! "Did you build all of these ships?" "Yes. I built them all last Tuesday. And I'm already tired of them. I'll build more next Tuesday." "Did you make them out of balsa wood?" "Why, of course. Aren't all models made of balsa wood?" Actually, we've had some pretty bright youngsters ask some great questions!

Oh, by the way, the turret tank is DRAINED! You can now view this iconic piece of history in its full naked glory. The conservation process has entered a new phase with updated equipment and evaluation tools. Ask any of the conservators about this; they seem pretty proud of their work!

I hope some of you attended the Wine Classic. It was a record-setting success, producing net revenue of over \$14,000.00 for The Museum's Bronze Door Society. It all goes back to the Museum to support our collections.

And, last but not never least, our own Hannah Fleming, Monitor Center coordinator, was a top-three winner in the 2017 Museum Hack (look it up) writing contest for her article "More Than Words: Explaining the Mission of The Mariners' Museum and Park". Check out her blogs on The Museum's website.

Up next on the Major Event calendar: Gallery Crawl! It's September 16 so I'll fill you in on that next month.

Ron Lewis

(Continued from page 1)



even easier than last month's. All I did was Googled "Decoy target ship." And, of course, he sent the link.

Before we reveal what's included in Tim's link, let's talk some more about evocations. According to Webster's an evocation is an "imaginative recreation"...sort of like some of our models. Some evocations are life size, but some are bigger than life and some are more cari-



ature than scale. And the bigger ones are everywhere, and they fire the imagination! There's the big elephant in New Jersey, The giant shoe in Pennsylvania and even bigger cowboy boots in Texas. Bealeton, Virginia features the largest roller skate in the world. Ohio has the Longaberger basket headquarters, which

looks like...a basket. In 1942, in Cincinnati, a 66-foot model of a Sims-class destroyer named USS Victory was built to help sell war bonds. California has the giant, drive thru donut, a brown derby restaurant, and dinosaurs amongst other items of interest. And right here in Newport News, we have our own example—the Monitor—at the Mariners' Museum. And they all evoke strong feelings about what they represent. Our Mystery Photo is an evocation, but it's also a training tool.

So, did you Google "Decoy target ship" as Tim did? I didn't. I Googled "target ship" and found the image at a site called Weird California (WeirdCa.com). Both Tim and I found the image to capture a training evocation whimsically called the "Muroc Maru." The more clever among you will instantly discern two important facts from this name: 1) Maru - Japanese merchant ship names often contain the word *Maru* at the end (meaning *circle*), and 2) Muroc is the name of a settlement formerly located at the edge of Rogers Dry Lake in southern California. So the inference is we have an imaginative recreation of a Japanese ship high and dry in Southern California.

And we did.

Back in 1910 the Corum brothers started a community next to the dry lake. There was (is) a well there. Since Corum was already the name of a California community, the brothers reversed the letters and called the place Muroc. In twenty years the population exploded to something close to 44. But that was before the Army Air Corps arrived in the early 1930's to establish an aerial bombing range. Prior to World War Two there were no structures there, but after Pearl Harbor a permanent base was established. In addition to erecting hangars and other buildings, the Army financed to the tune of \$35,819.18, the Muroc Maru, a replica of a Japanese Navy Cruiser. It was intended for use to train pilots in strafing and, of course, bombing of enemy warships. It also functioned as a large identification model to train pilots to recognize Japanese naval warships.

"Officially it was called "T-799 Japanese Battleship, Plan No 944/41 W-509-Eng 4239". It was 650 feet long and built out of 4x4s and chicken wire. Tar paper and chicken feathers covered the structure. With the sand packed around the ship

(Continued on page 3)



4-Oct-44 Simulated Bomb Target

(Continued from page 2)



like waves and the heat waves causing the desert floor to ripple and shimmer like an ocean, the ship certainly gave the mirage like effect that it was sailing on actual waters.” Tar paper and chicken feathers...hence my use of the term evocation.

“From 1943 to 1950, motorists cruising out in the Mojave Desert down what is now California State Route 58 were often shocked to see a 650 foot long Imperial Japanese Navy Takao class cruiser sailing along the sands of the desert, complete with the Rising Sun flag on one of the masts.” And indeed it did closely resemble a *Takao*-class cruiser. With or without the flag, our mystery phone caller should have picked up on that.

“Until 1950, the Muroc Maru was bombed and shot at. For some reason in 1950, the structure was declared a "flight hazard". Army engineers were sent in to dismantle the ship, which turned out to be an extremely difficult chore with all the unexploded bombs in the belly of the ship.” Little remains to mark the location today. A scour of the site using Google maps didn't produce an exact location but I did spot 2 likable areas for the target ship. The likable spots just happen to be located within the segment of the complex noted as the Muroc Bombing and Gunnery Range on an old 1942 topographical survey of the Rogers Dry Lake basin. Who knows?

I also found the town of Muroc on the 1942 survey. Muroc was located at about a point where the old Atchison & Topeka and Santa Fe right-of-way (You can still see where the old railroad right-of-way cut right across the center of the dry lake) intersected old Randsburg Road. Randsburg Road and the current desert salt pan runway, 36 left (or 18 right), occupy about the same physical location. Did the old highway 58 (route 466 back then) also cross the dry lake near the old rail line back in the day?

You can read much of the history of Muroc Maru if you have this reference: [The Jagged Edge of Duty: A Fighter Pilot's World War II](#), by Robert L. Richardson. If you don't have or don't want to read his book, that's fine as this essay covers just about all the juicy bits. Now you know more about

this Mystery than you can possibly digest—especially the chicken feathers! Training....yes; recruiting....probably not so much! If the structure was still with us today, it could be considered either a very kitschy example of Americana or a divisive reminder of racism—such is the nature of our modern, thin skin. It's probably best that it was removed. Kuddos to Tim.

Finally, my research did turn up this interesting side note about another warship #799: “**Design A-150**, also known as the **Super Yamato class**. Initial plans for the A-150 battleships called for eight or nine 510 mm guns in double or triple turrets. With war on the horizon in early 1941, all design work was diverted from battleships—even though the A-150s' design was virtually complete—so that a demand for "aircraft carriers, cruisers, and smaller ships" could be met. Even though no work was being done on them, two ships of Design A-150, provisionally designated as Warships Number 798 and 799, were projected in a 1942 building program. 798 was to be built in the same dock as *Shinano*, while 799 was to be built in Kure in the same dock as *Yamato* after the fourth ship in the class, Warship Number 111, was launched. Both of the ships' keels were supposed to be laid in late 1941 or early 1942, launched in 1944–1945, and finished in 1946–1947. However, the war's turn against the Japanese after the Battle of Midway meant that the need for ships other than battleships never abated.”

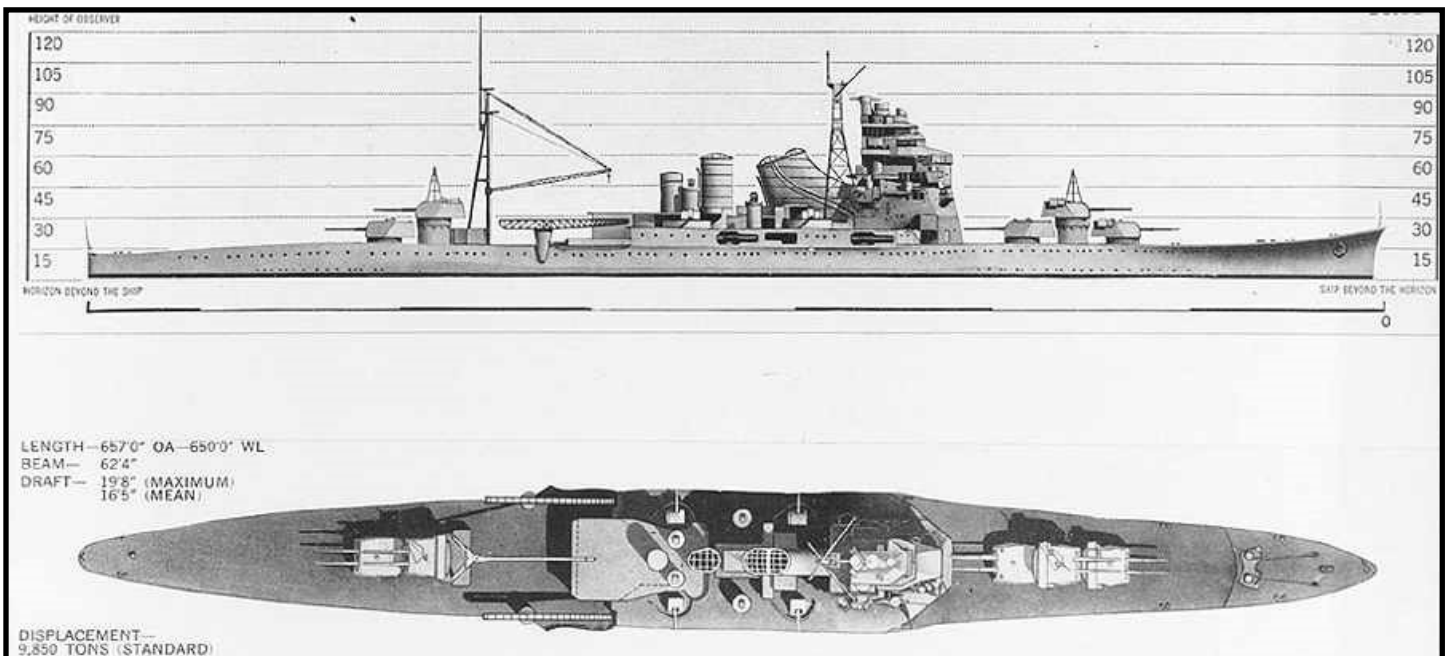
John Cheevers

THE ANSWER

The answer to mystery photo 373:

The “Muroc Maru,” a 650-foot mock battleship used for Air Force target practice at Edwards Air Force Base, c. 1950

Takao Class Recognition Drawing





Howard Hoege addresses the 50th anniversary reception



Gene Berger making his remarks at the reception



Gene Berger's tugboat



WeCheer rotary tool



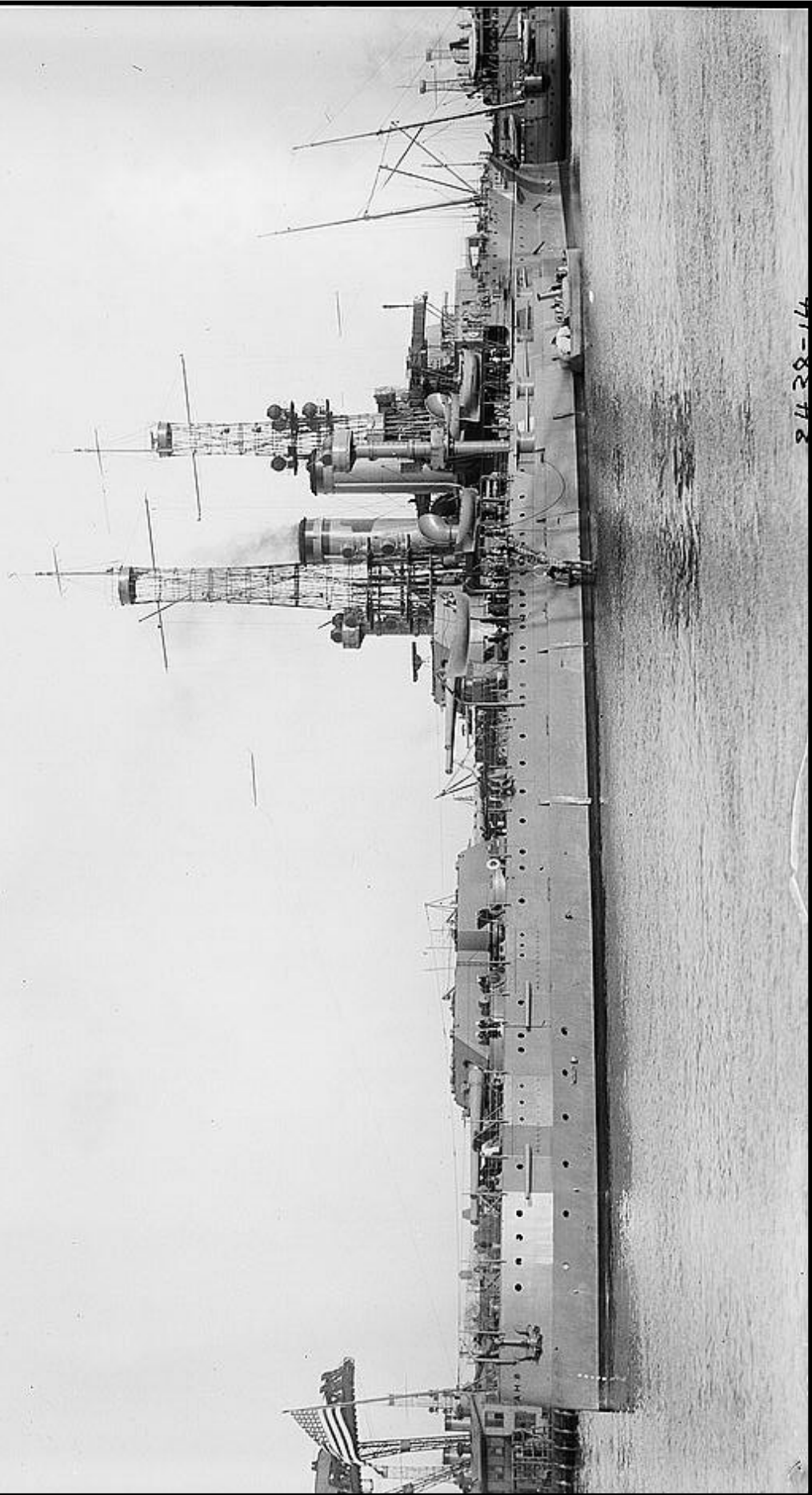
Stewart Winn's Mortar Vessel



Marty Gromovsky at work

Mystery Photo

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



8428-14

NOTABLE EVENTS

MINUTES



AUGUST

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

SEPTEMBER

- 9 HRSMS Monthly Meeting
Picnic, Newport News Park
19 Talk Like a Pirate Day

OCTOBER

- 14 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation, Marty Gromovsky, TBA
26-28 NRG Conference

NOVEMBER

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

DECEMBER

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

JANUARY

- 13 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

FEBRUARY

- 11 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation,
Election of officers

MARCH

- 10 HRSMS Monthly Meeting:

APRIL

- 14 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

MAY

- 12 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

JUNE

- 9 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

JULY

- 14 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

"The best bilge pump of all is a bucket in the hands of a
frightened man"

- Butch Dalrymple-Smith

WATCH, QUARTER AND STATION BILL



Skipper: Gene Berger (757) 850-4407
Mate: Ron Lewis (757) 874-8219
Purser: Ryland Craze (804) 739-8804
Clerk: Tom Saunders (757) 850-0580
Historian: Tim Wood (757) 481-6018
Editors: John Cheevers (757) 591-8955
Bill Clarke (757) 868-6809
Tom Saunders (757) 850-0580
Webmaster: Greg Harrington (757) 930-4615
Photographer: Marty Gromovsky

Hampton Roads Ship Model Society
Monthly Meeting
Mariners' Museum
July 10, 2017
Guests: None

The Skipper, Gene Berger called the meeting to order at 1005 hours. Asked for guests to come forward and none presented themselves. Gene distributed packets of information to the members that were going to have a model in the HRSMS 50th anniversary exhibit. The packets included the delivery schedule for the model to insure an orderly construction of the exhibit and a registration form to include details of the model. It was then announced that there will be a reception to be held on the evening of August 3rd prior to the exhibits opening. Gene said that the museum will be sending invitations with an RSVP to the members at a later date. After some discussion a motion was made and passed to donate up to \$1000.00 to the museum to help underwrite the reception expenses. Gene then asked for models to be displayed in the model builders stand to replace those going into the exhibit.

There were no corrections to the minutes as published. Ryland Craze gave the Purser's report detailing receipts, expenditures and the account balance.

Old Business: Due to the length of the meeting most old business was deferred until the August meeting. At a previous meeting's auction Bill Clarke procured a schnell boat kit and Ron Lewis pledged \$100.00 to the HRSMS upon its completion. Gene Burger reminded everyone of the "Bill Clarke Challenge" and added another \$100.00 to the pot. With great enthusiasm, Ryland Craze, Dave Baker, Heinz Schiller, John Cheevers and Marty Gromovsky all came aboard and sweetened the kitty.

New Business: Ryland Craze asked about sponsoring awards at the IPMS Old Dominion Open. It was decided that we sponsor several classes and Ryland was asked to get the details from the Richmond group.

Show & Tell: John Cheevers showed a WeCheer rotary tool from Woodcraft and a Woodriver No. 1 plane. Stewart Winn showed the progress on his Caldercraft Mortar Vessel Convulsion. Marty Gromovsky showed several photo etch sets for models that were sold at the last auction and said that he was willing to give them to the people who bought the models. Bruce Brown showed the progress on his third iteration of the Hermione this one using the updated Artesania Latina kit. Gene Berger showed a tug based on an old Revell kit to accompany his United States.

The meeting was adjourned to a presentation "Carving the Chine Hull", by John Cheevers.

Nautical Term

Racking Fastening two opposing parts of a tackle together to keep it from moving. The origin is obscure; it may be Old English or Middle Dutch.

Tim Wood