

Hampton Roads Ship Model Society Logbook!

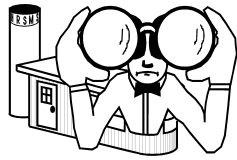


No. 382

WWW.HRSMS.ORG

April, 2018

From The Bridge



Mystery Photo



Captain's Log 4.14.18

If it's remarkable that an organization such as ours endured for over fifty years, then it is truly exceptional that one of its members had been a member of that institution for nearly as long.

Bill Clarke, for the past half century, was honored for this distinction at last month's banquet. Actually, the honor was ours to celebrate this impressive anniversary with him. Bill was presented with a plaque to commemorate the occasion and awarded a sort of "get out of jail free" certificate which entitles Bill free membership in the HRSMS for life. To our friend and member since 1968, we say, "live long and ..."



Bill Clarke receiving his 50th Anniversary Plaque.

MEETING NOTICE

Date: Saturday April 14, 2018
Place: Mariners' Museum
Time: 1000 Hours

Mystery Photo #381: John Wyld may have been right when he said that there was nothing to write about with this ship. But, then again, he may have been wrong—his opinion may be bupkis. The correctness of his reply is not that important. What is important is having his reply. But I'll ask: If you can't think of something to say about a photograph, are you really looking at the photograph? I'll agree that while the avenues available in this photograph may not be numerous, the few that we do have are lined well. The name of this column is the "Mystery Photo", not the "Mystery Ship". And with that small distinction, we should be able to write on numerous topics related to the image. And I think we shall.

This image captures a foreshortened view of a rather odd looking vessel framed slightly left of center. Off center but properly framed to capture all the little boats as well. The ship is back lit and considerable reflective glare brightens the water and darkens the image. Whomever printed the image really worked to burn in the details or we would be looking at a silhouette.

So we have a ship whose flags hang limp at the jack and ensign staffs making initial identification difficult. Difficult, that is, if you don't recognize the vessel. The vessel is obviously an aircraft carrier, the flat deck is the giveaway. But you'll notice that where the bow and flight deck come together they form a relatively sharp knife edge. You'll also notice how the hull plating goes all the way to the flight deck except in areas used for boat stowage and at the stern. Another interesting feature is how low to the waterline we find the anchor bolster. Men and material crowd the deck in various places, no aircraft are visible. The flight deck seems to be only about three and ½ decks above the water—this is very low compared to US Navy aircraft carriers and that is a clue. Another giant clue is the massive island and even more massive mast. This mast makes you think the ship is intended to be mistaken for a battleship when spotted from a distance. The ship is at rest and normal shore side operations seem to be in effect.

Obviously John Wyld identified the vessel, but so did Bill Clarke and Marty Gromovsky. They gave me verbal confirmation of her identity and two out of three have it right. But, just to add intrigue to the mystery, the fellow who submitted the image asked them "or is it?" we'll get to this later. Now it's time to see what the written replies say. Two were received; one from Tim wood and one from Rob Napier. In case you don't know, they are both carrier men but not Airedales.

Tim leads the way saying "Very timely photo again this month. (It goes along with Paul Allen's discovery of the

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What's Happening at the Museum

"Though April showers may come your way..." well, The Museum has a shower of events this month and a little rain is not going to spoil the schedule! But first, Pat Roll's presentation couldn't be more timely! Global positioning by latitude with Celestial Navigation is all we had for centuries...until a fellow named John Harrison came up with a solution for longitude. And April 3rd marked Mr. Harrison's 325th birthday! Not sure what sort of celebration is appropriate but I've set my watch to Greenwich Time in Mr. Harrison's honor! But I digress. Saturday, after our meeting, John Quarstein, noted local historian, will present a talk on Rear Admiral DuPont's attack on Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie. Imagine the onlookers in April 1863 watching a squadron of nine ironclad warships closing in on the harbor in South Carolina! Most folks didn't even know that there were nine ironclads in existence! The lecture begins at 2:30. On Thursday, the 19th, well-known author Hampton Sides will present *In the Kingdom of Ice*, his most recent historical novel. His recount of the ill-fated voyage of USS *Jeanette*, is a spellbinding tale of heroism and determination in a frozen hell in the most lonesome corner of the world. This is a featured program of the Spring Lecture Series and cost is 5.00 to non-members, free to Museum members. Then, on the 21st Marty Moynihan, former captain of the USCG *Eagle*, will present a talk on the most famous shipwreck in history, the sinking of RMS *Titanic* and how her sinking affected maritime safety and transformed the U.S. Coast Guard. Captain Moynihan served 30 years in the Coast Guard commanding four cutters and spent ten years as an officer in the International Ice Patrol. The program begins at 2:30. Then, for the early risers, a bird watch will convene at 7:00 AM Sunday morning the 22nd. Members of the Hampton Roads Bird Club will be your guides along the Noland Trail identifying the local avian residents and soaking up some nature knowledge. The hike starts at the Lion's Bridge. Then, on the 28th, a double feature. Ever consider a rain barrel? You can make one under the expert guidance of the Virginia Cooperative Extension and through the sponsorship of the City of Newport News and The Mariners' Museum. The workshop starts at 10:00 and you'll leave with a complete usable 55 gallon rain barrel ready to collect all that free April water! The cost, \$70.00, covers all supplies. Then, same day at 2:30, a macro-photography workshop presented by The Museum staff and the James River Camera Club. Technique will be the objective and, as an added benefit, you'll have the opportunity to photograph some of The Museum's rare and seldom seen artifacts from the extensive collections. Bring your camera and any close-up accessories you have. The camera is essential but if you have no close-up devices, don't worry; you'll still learn from the experts. This seminar is \$40.00 for non-members and 25.00 for Museum members. Now, how's that for a full lid?! The lectures are free with admission and the discounts should entice you to become a member! Next month, an announcement of summer scheduling and the mysterious story of the Ronson timbers!

Ron Lewis

I have no interest in sailing around the world. Not that there is any lack of requests for me to do so.

Edward Heath

AMERICAN NAVAL HISTORY

1812 Part II

July 3-September 7: Master Commandant David Porter sails from New York in the frigate *Essex*. He captures seven merchantmen, a transport, and the first British warship. This is the first British warship taken in the War of 1812.

July 17: The brig *Nautilus*, is captured off New York by the ship-of-the-line *Africa* and the frigates *Aeolus* and *Shannon*. She is the first American warship captured and lost in the War of 1812.

July 17-20: The Naval frigate *Constitution*, off the coast of New Jersey, with Captain Isaac Hull, is in the presence of seven British ships. She manages to escape through brilliant seamanship after an epic chase lasting 66 hours.

July-August: Fort Mackinac on Lake Huron, falls to the British on July 17th. Fort Dearborn (modern-day Chicago) falls on August 15th. Next day at Detroit, General William Hull surrenders. He surrenders has force of 2,500 men to a force of 1,300 Canadians and Indians under Brigadier General Sir Issac Brock.

The War of 1812 Continues

Bob Moritz

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USS *Lexington* (Lady *Lex*), both were sunk by the Japanese during WWII." And speaking of timely, the second reply begins with: "Hope this isn't too late. Of course, you know I'm a sucker for flat-tops." Rob continues, "At first, I thought the MP was the 1924 HMS *Eagle*, but too much didn't fit.

Maybe she had had her superstructure rebuilt to centralize all the uptakes from two funnels into one. I dunno. But then I saw that *Eagle* had a ram bow (which was not clear in the MP), so I moved on..." I like this remark because not only does it echo my statement from the first paragraph but it also matches the one incorrect verbal reply we have and it shows how you sometimes need to take a closer look to see the differences.

OK, it's time to bring the guys who got it correct into line and do the big reveal. Tim gets the honors as he was first to write, but he announces it in an interesting way: "HMS *Hermes* is currently lying off the east coast of Sri Lanka. *Hermes* was berthed in Trincomalee on 8 April when a warning of an approaching Japanese fleet was received, and she sailed that day for the Maldives with no aircraft on board. On 9 April a Japanese scout plane spotted her near Batticaloa, and she was attacked by several dozen dive bombers shortly afterwards. With no air cover, the carrier was quickly sunk by the Japanese aircraft. Most of the survivors were rescued by a nearby hospital ship, although 307 men from *Hermes* were lost in the sinking."

Rob found her as well using old technology—a 1984 vintage book, Roger "Chesneau's Aircraft Carriers of the World, 1914 to the Present"—and his process of elimination by matching features: "Monster island. Petal-shaped foredeck in plan view. And another of those silly pointed flight decks." When he thought he had it right he went to what he calls "the Interweb"

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to type in "HMS Hermes". "And, Lo!, the MP is the FIRST image to pop up. I go to the page: Wikipedia. Shows that the MP is Hermes "off Yantai, China, circa 1931." Funny how that works. And just be sure we Southerners understand and say it correctly, he adds: "Now, the Brits probably pronounce the name of this vessel as "Her'-meez", but the French fashion house of the same names says, as you might expect, "Air'-mez." Get it straight!

Hermes is a ship of distinction. Commissioned in 1924, she is listed as the first ship designed from the keel up to be an aircraft carrier. The Japanese navy IJN Hosho has the distinction of being the first carrier designed from the keel up to be commissioned. And did the Brits get it straight? They tried to. Hermes commissioned after Hosho due to several factors. Probably the most egregious of which was that her building yard closed while she was fitting out. Her delayed building was primarily due to design changes resulting from actual experience and experiments with operational carriers. This contrasts nicely with one of Rob's remarks: "So much we learned from the Brits about innovations for aircraft carriers: weren't angle decks and



HMS Hermes, 1919

catapults their idea? So how come they are so counter intuitive: a pointy bow on a carrier? Just seems wrong, somehow." The pointy, petal shaped bow was a feature on all British carriers until the Ark Royal was laid down in 1935. I suspect that the low freeboard coupled with the North Sea was the culprit.

Characteristics:

Displacement: 10,850 long tons standard, 13,700 long tons (deep load)

Length: 600 ft (182.9 m)

Nautical Term

McNamara's Lace A navy slang term, sometimes heard in merchant ships, for the almost-disappeared "fancy work," such as macramé curtains, cushions and ornaments. It is said to have been named for an old boatswain, but another possibility is that it is a corruption of macramé.

Tim Wood

Modeler of the Month April 2018

John Cheevers



I may be a professional shipbuilder, but it was actually ship modeling that sparked my lifelong interest in ships and things nautical. I grew up in a rural spot in Kentucky; one close enough to the Ohio River to enjoy hearing and seeing the riverboats. And, I've always been fascinated with making things and working with wood. So modeling of nautical things seems like a logical progression. I guess I've been modeling ships for about 50 years. I started assembling plastic kits as a kid but quickly learned to scratch build in wood and brass. I would not say that my initial efforts were a success. It wasn't until I moved to Southeast Virginia to begin an Apprenticeship in shipbuilding that I learned some things to make scratch building a success. I learned the rest after I joined the Hampton Roads Ship Model Society in 1980. There, some of the professional model makers took me under their wing. Since that time, I built ship models mostly on commission. My interest lies in steam and engine powered vessels from about 1880 to 1930.

Beam: 70 ft 3 in (21.4 m)

Draught: 23 ft 3 in (7.1 m) (deep load)

Installed power: 40,000 shp (30,000 kW)

Propulsion:

2 shafts

2 geared steam turbine sets

6 water-tube boilers

Speed: 25 knots (46 km/h; 29 mph)

Range: 5,600 nmi (10,400 km; 6,400 mi) at 10 knots (19 km/h; 12 mph)

Complement: 566 (excluding aircrew)

Armament:

6 × 1 – 5.5-inch guns

4 × 1 – 4-inch anti-aircraft guns

Armour:

Belt: 3 in (76 mm)

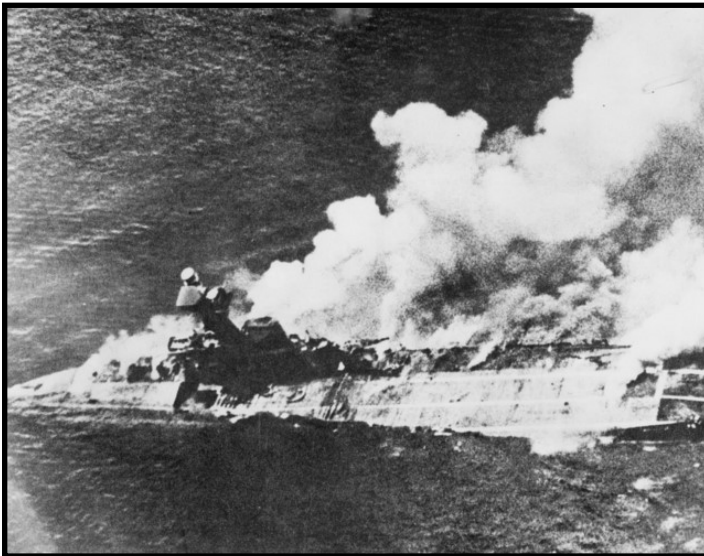
Deck: 1 in (25 mm)

Aircraft carried: 20

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As Wyld alludes, Hermes was not a major player in naval events. She was built after the Great War and perished too soon in the war that followed. Rob terms her career as “long enough.” Maybe so, but early on in the Second World War she was valuable enough to warrant a stand in. This is what the submitter alluded to when he asked the three amigos “or is it?”



HMS Hermes sinking

Let me explain. There is a confusing remark accompanying our Mystery Photo in Wikipedia. The Photograph as we’ve identified it should properly be captioned “The British carrier HMS Hermes (95) pictured underway off Yantai (known in the West as “Chefoo” then), China.” And dated “circa 1931.” But through the power of the Internet and poor writing, sometimes things are turned askew. While this image was found at the Wikipedia site for “HMS Hermes (95)”, it can also be found at another site “SS Zealandic (1911).” There the same image is

captioned “(HMS Hermes) SS Mamari III was converted to resemble HMS Hermes as a decoy ship.” Was the submitter confused by this caption?



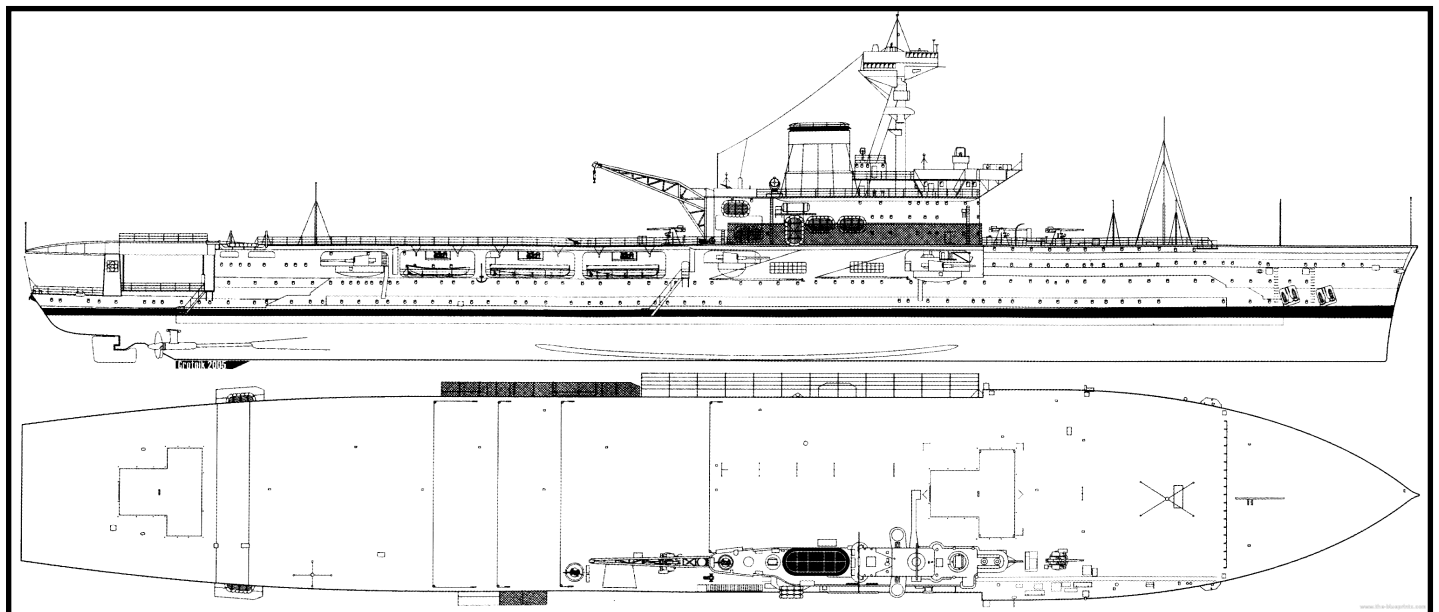
SS Zealandic

How, you ask, was he confused? Simple. This all happened between 1939 and 1940 during what has been come to be called “The Phoney War.” It seems that the British liked to use subterfuge to help deceive the enemy. Nice tactic to use in the age before radar and satellites and cell phones. To deceive the enemy as to where certain vessels were, the British converted fleet tenders to resemble specific capital ships so that reconnaissance aircraft would report them in port (primarily at Scapa Flow) when they were elsewhere helping the cause. HMS Revenge had one, HMS Resolution had one, and so did HMS Hermes. Also, the demilitarized battleship HMS Centurion masqueraded as HMS Anson in the Mediterranean.



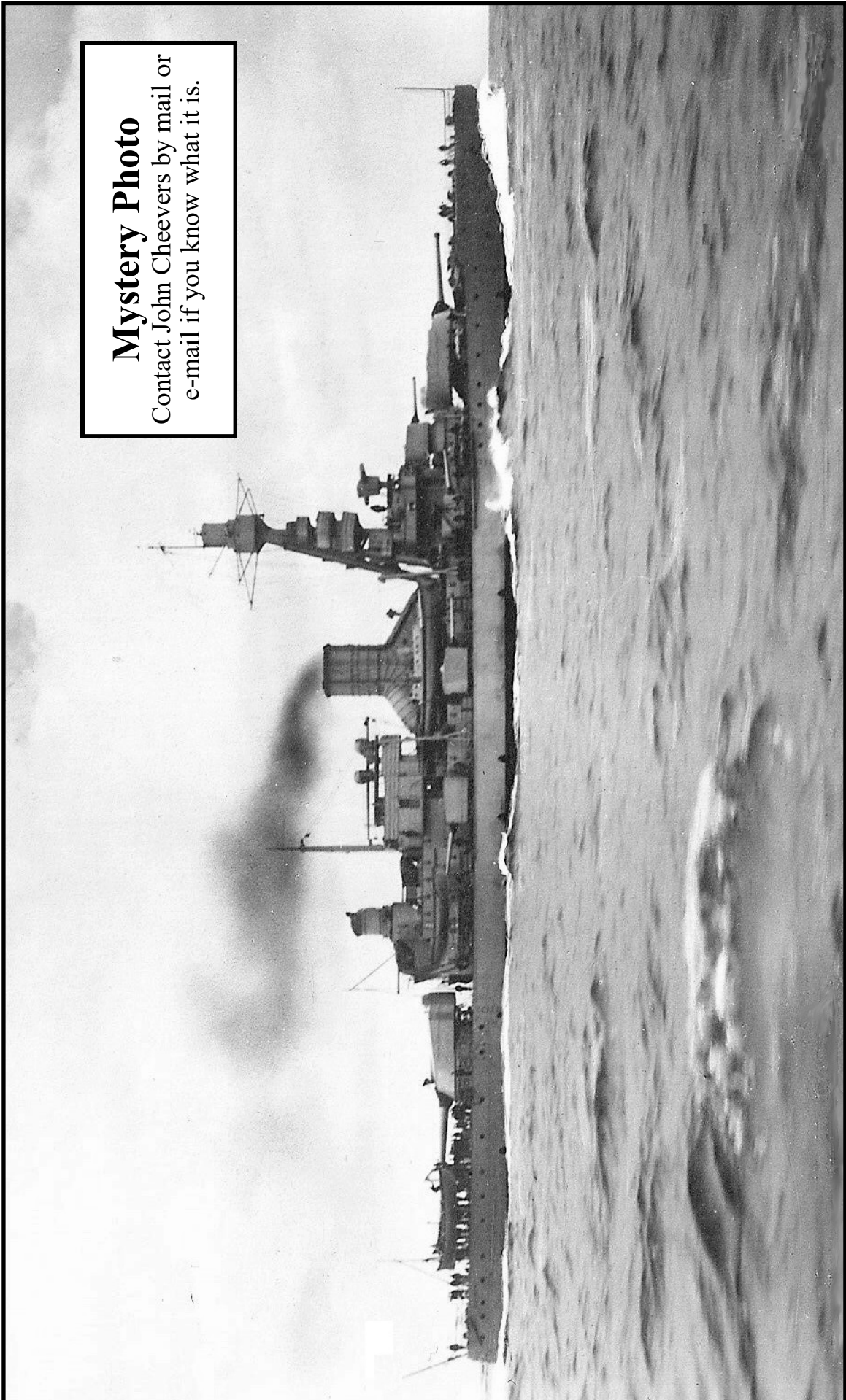
Decoy Hermes

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Mystery Photo

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



NOTABLE EVENTS

APRIL

- 14 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation, Pat Roll, Celestial Navigation

MAY

- 12 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation, Gene Berger TBA

JUNE

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

JULY

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

AUGUST

- 11 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation, Gene Berger, TBA

SEPTEMBER

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

OCTOBER

- 13 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation, Gene Berger, TBA

NOVEMBER

- 10 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation, Marty Gromovsky, TBA

DECEMBER

- 8 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation: Dave Baker, TBA

JANUARY

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

FEBRUARY

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

MARCH

- 9 HRSMS Monthly Meeting:

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

MINUTES



Hampton Roads Ship Model Society
Monthly Meeting
Norge Hall
March 10, 2018

Guests: Rick Amory, 1st meeting
Richard Bottone, 2nd meeting

The meeting was called to order by Skipper Gene Berger at 1013 hours. Gene then welcomed the guests. Next, the Skipper reminded everyone of the banquet to be held on March 17th and that Ryland Craze was still collecting the 2018 dues. Ulrich Guenther, Greg Harrington and Stewart Winn were congratulated on their awards at the Old Dominion Open model contest. Ryland Craze gave the Purser's report. The business meeting was adjourned.

John Cheevers explained the auction process and conducted the auction of donated items.

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Hermes' decoy began life as the merchant ship SS Zealandic "a British ocean liner initially operated by White Star Line—hence the "ic" in the name. She was put into service on the Liverpool to Wellington, New Zealand run. Following troop ship duty in World War One, she was sold and renamed several times, eventually becoming SS Mamari and shifting to the Australian route in 1934 as Mamari III. In 1939 the Admiralty purchased her as a tender and converted her to the Hermes decoy. Her name at the time was Fleet Tender C. "On 4 June 1941, while on course for Chatham Docks in Kent to be converted back to a cargo vessel, she was attacked by German aircraft off the English coast near Cromer, Norfolk. While trying to evade the attack she struck a submerged wreck (the Ahamo at 53-22N, 0-59E which had struck a mine on 8 April that year) and ran aground. She was intended to be salvaged and refloated; however, before this was possible the beached ship was torpedoed by German E-boats." So in the end, The Japanese military sunk the real one and the German military sunk the fake one.

Finally, a word about that giant mast and spotting tower. It seems so out of place and anachronistic. Logic says that if you needed to spot something, instead of climbing the giant mast, why not send off an airplane? Just saying...

John Cheevers

THE ANSWER

The answer to mystery photo 381:
The British carrier HMS *Hermes* (95) underway off Yantai, China.