

Hampton Roads Ship Model Society Logbook!

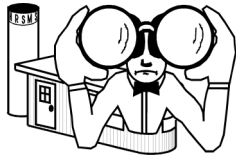


No. 399

WWW.HRSMS.ORG

September, 2019

From The Bridge



Mystery Photo



Captain's Log 9.14.19

"It was a dark and stormy night..." well, it was dark. The yard needed cleaning up anyway. Not that I'm complaining. We dodged this one, but tis the season. I do have it on good authority, however that the weather will be more agreeable for our annual HRSMS picnic this coming Saturday. I hope you can make it. Come out and bring a dish to share. There's still time to sign up. Just let me know as soon as you can so that we can plan the menu. It's always a good time. See the details elsewhere in this Log.

Until Saturday,

Dear Leader

THE ANSWER

The answer to Mystery Photo 398:
USS Stringham Torpedo Boat # 19
Photographed in 1907.
U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command Photograph.
Catalog #: NH 63736

MEETING NOTICE

Date: Saturday September 14, 2019
Place: Newport News Park
Time: 1000 Hours

Mystery Photo #398: Going, going, gone! In a few years it may all be gone. What will be gone, you ask? It's that thing that you can only see—or partially see—when a force of nature aligns with time and position to allow a visual inspection. It's that object that has assumed virtual cult status in Tidewater by becoming its own mystery. To the casual observer it's an unidentifiable pile of rusty junk. To those with a better vantage point, more of it may be discernable. To you and me it's the legend of the old German U-boat wreck. But shortly, the progress of man could conspire to obliterate the remains and the subject of this month's essay.

Admittedly, this Mystery can be difficult to solve. The photo shows just a small, seemingly black-hulled vessel with three short stacks and a single pole mast. There is the hint of a larger three stacker in the distance. You can see an ensign flying from the staff at the stern and it offers a hint of stripes. While dark uniforms and jackets and caps give a hint of cold weather and might help define the season, other features are swallowed by the darkness of the print. Nevertheless, it's a nice pose for a portrait that offers very little in the way of tangible evidence. Or does it? If you are familiar with the ship type, solving for the answer may not be so bad. All you need is a

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Nautical Term

Annunciator A device for the transmitting orders from the bridge of a ship to the engine room, generally for the main engine(s). The word was created from the Latin annuntiat, announce.

Tim Wood

Hampton Roads Ship Model Society Picnic

Saturday September 14, 2019

Newport News Park

Shelter No. 10

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

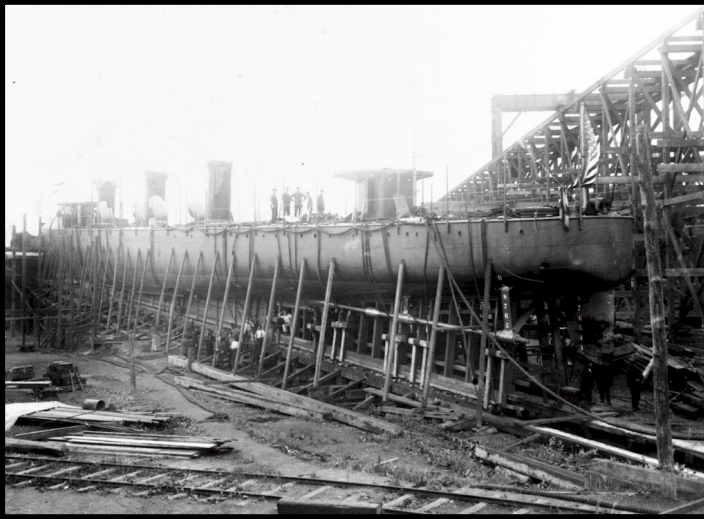
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good reference source, preferably one with pictures, a cup of your favorite beverage, and a bit of time. So, start comparing.

Or, you can read the local newspaper and news feeds. There, you will find a story that is the basis for choosing this vessel to be this month's Mystery Photograph. That story covers the beginnings of

the process to fix one of the biggest traffic detriments to the Tidewater area. Just think about what your biggest beef is with the local traffic, and you'll be on target. And our Mystery vessel is in the way of that target.



USS Stringham (TB-19) fully plated prior to her 10 June 1899 launching at Harlan & Hollingsworth shipyard, Wilmington, Delaware

Hint: Have you ever heard anyone praise the wait times to cross the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel? It's surprising that you don't. It's even more surprising that the wait doesn't get praise from the younger crowd whom I would suspect would be thrilled to have the extra free time to text, snapchat, twitter, and video stream. I guess you can't please them in their hurried life. But when your wait is over and you finally emerge from the tunnel, going west to east on I-64 mind you, you can glimpse debris at the water's edge on Willoughby Spit. Bet you didn't notice. But it's there, just to the west of where a motel used to be, right at the corner of the concrete pad.

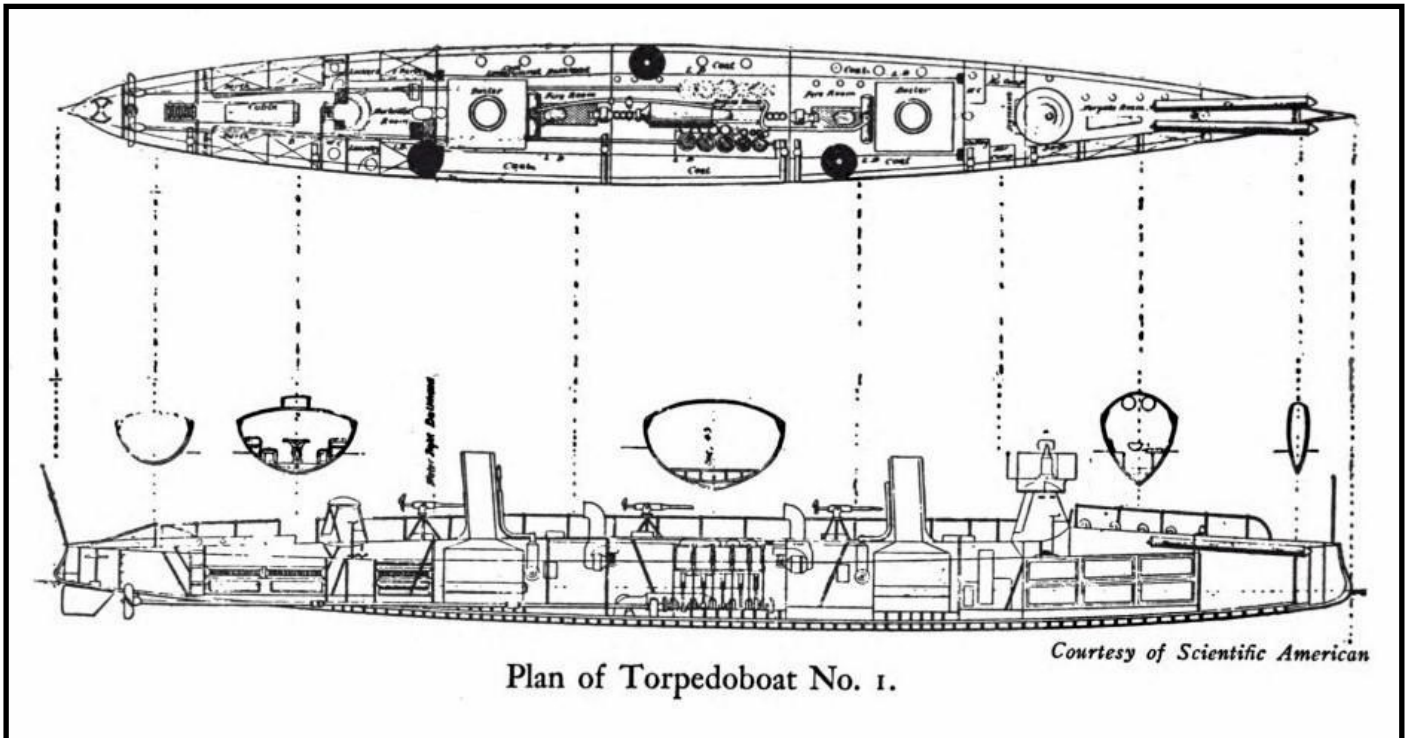
Anyway, that debris is our focal point. It rests there, Mediterranean-style, adjacent to the pad, just a stone's throw from the "Spit" end of old Route 60, what the locals call West Ocean View Drive. And if you look real hard you can see something that looks like a giant valve handle protruding from the water.

When I was new to this area I asked a local about that pile of debris (there was more visible then) because it looked like ship frames and crumpled plating. He said that it was the remains of a World War Two Nazi U-boat that had penetrated into Hampton Roads and, of course, sunk by the harbor patrol. OK, I said. What did I know? Well the story persisted and grew to include dead German submariners buried in the Hampton Veterans Cemetery. I eventually came to think that that rusty pile of steel just might be an old submarine except for the nagging fact that I could not find corroborating evidence. I made a plan to stop one day and survey the site myself—still waiting, life gets in the way.

One reply this month and it came from our ship identification expert Dave Baker. Not one to be troubled by local legend, Dave offered this: "This month's mystery ship was too easy, but as I had a drawing of it and another photo, I thought I'd at least write up some information about her not very distinguished career:

"The mystery ship is the one-of-a-kind U.S.S. STRINGHAM, Torpedo Boat # 19, with the photo having been

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What's Happening at the Museum

Just a reminder:

Saturday, September 21

6:30 PM

Take a trip around the world without leaving Hampton Roads!

The fifth annual Mariners' Gallery Crawl provides exclusive access to rare artifacts and makes the perfect date night or a fun evening out with friends. Hear intriguing stories from Museum staff about the objects from ports all over the world, enjoy lively music and spirited drinks, and nosh on delicious bites while you mingle throughout the Museum. This worldly event is a Museum experience like no other!

This is always a treat! And it's a very successful fund raiser for TMM. Get your tickets now on line or you might be too late. This one sells out!

And another reminder; we could use another couple of modelers to be available as stand-bys for the Model Shop. We've been reliably staffed in the shop for several years now and our visitors are looking forward to meeting the modelers in the gallery. The shop is a person-to-person experience and an enhancement to the visitors' impression of The Museum. Let me know if you're interested and I'll put you in touch with the staffer who can qualify you as an alternate modeler.

This past summer season we've had the opportunity, through The Museum's Lecture Series, to hear over a dozen presentations on our maritime history from early days up to the present. I hope you have been able to attend one or more of these presentations, all of which were noted on the website and almost all of which were free to members. And I'll try to keep you informed of the dates and titles of next season's offerings as they are announced. Changes to the configuration, particularly the Monitor Center, will add a new chapter to the museum experience. I would strongly encourage HRSMS members to become TMM members and follow the progress of a major structural change as it unfolds over 2020 and into the future. We are in a museum environment unlike any other in the world. In the midst of over a quarter century of volunteer engagement, I still find parts of the Museum new, exciting and surprising! Learning is a lifelong pursuit; and there are very few venues that offer to us, already steeped in maritime experience and knowledge, the many opportunities found here. Spend more than just one day a month in The Museum and get a real taste of the history, the artifacts, the research programs, the conservation projects that made The Mariners' Museum, by act of Congress, "America's National Maritime Museum".

Ron Lewis

"Thing about boats is, you can always sell them if you don't like them. Can't sell kids."

— Lin Pardey

AMERICAN NAVAL HISTORY

1820

March 22: Decatur-Barron duel. Commodore Stephen Decatur is mortally wounded in a duel with Commodore James Barton at Bladensburg, Maryland, a sort distance outside of the District of Columbia. They had been close friends until Decatur was ordered to sit on the court-martial that found Barron guilty of negligence in the Chesapeake-Leopard affair. During his suspension from duty, Barron entered the merchant marine. Caught in Europe at the outbreak of the War of 1812, he did not return home to reenter the service until the conclusion of peace. Although Barron claimed that it had been impossible to arrange passage during the conflict, many officers ascribed his absence to cowardice. Hearing that Decatur was among this number, Barron challenged him, hoping in this manner to demonstrate his courage. There is something very close to a reconciliation between the two men on the dueling field, and had their seconds (Commodore Bainbridge for Decatur and Captain Elliot for Barron) shown proper initiative, the quarrel could probably have been resolved without bloodshed. As it is, neither of them shoots to kill. Barron is hit in the thigh, Decatur is struck in the hip by a ball that ricochets up into his groin. He dies, at age forty, 12 hours later. Barron recovers and eventually becomes the most senior officer in the navy, but is never given command at sea.

April 5-12: Five slave ships are captured by the frigate Cyane between Cape Mount and the mouth of the River Gallinas off present-day Liberia.

May 16: The frigate Congress sails from Hampton Roads, Va., to become the first naval vessel to visit China. She arrives there in December.

October 17: Brevet Major Archibald Henderson is appointed fifth commandant of the marine corps. A post he will hold for almost 40 years.

1820 Ends with no further actions.

Bob Moritz

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taken at the 1907 Jamestown Naval Review (with a MAINE-class pre-dreadnought battleship visible in the background). STRINGHAM was built by Harlan & Hollingsworth Co., Wilmington, Delaware. Ordered on 29 July 1897 for \$236,000.00, she was laid down on 21 March 1898, launched on 11 June 1899, and placed in reduced commission until finally being commissioned on 30 October 1906 to join the Atlantic Fleet.

The ship was the largest of any of the USN's steam-powered torpedo boats at 225 ft. overall and had a beam of 22 ft. and a mean draft of 6-ft. 6-in. for a normal displacement of 340 tons and a full load displacement of 401 tons. Her maximum speed on trials was 25.33 knots at 378 tons displacement, and her bunkers could accommodate 95 tons of coal. The ship

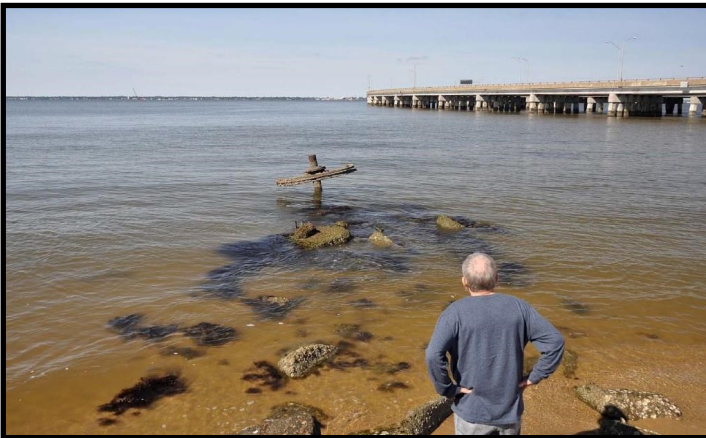
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had two 3,600 indicated horsepower vertical triple-expansion steam engines and four Thornycroft boilers. Her single General Electric generator provided 5 kilowatts at 80 volts. The crew consisted of 39 officers and enlisted personnel. The ship's armament consisted of four 6-pounder guns and two 18-in. torpedo tubes, although the guns do not appear to have been mounted in the photo.

The ship was named for Silas Horton Stringham, who served in the U.S. Navy from the War of 1812 through the Civil War, reaching the rank of rear admiral in 1862 and dying



Marine Archaeologist Dr. John Broadwater looks out over the James River from the tip of Willoughby Spit, where one or more ship hulks lie just off the beach.

in 1876. The ship spent most of her career either in reserve or being used for trials and training at the U.S. Naval Academy and the Experimental Station at Annapolis. Stricken at the Norfolk Navy Yard on 21 November 1913, the STRINGHAM was designated on 17 December of that year to be expended as a gunnery target but was not used as such and was sold on 18 May 1923 for scrapping.”

Dave is correct, of course, and he cites the Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships and Ships' Data U.S. Naval Vessels 1912 as his reference. But DANFS only goes as far as to document a vessel before it is removed from the official list—that's as far as the Navy will track an asset in their dictionary. Many ships have been sold out of service and listed as “sold for scrap” only to go to other duty or remain viable in one sense or other for many years. The same is true of commercial vessels once they are removed from the official registries. We (humans) tend to keep things around or tucked away and only walk away from them if they become totally useless, have a catastrophic event, or when no one is looking. Could the vessel in our Mystery still be tucked somewhere?

Ok, here's what we know: The ship in the Mystery Photo is the torpedo boat *USS Stringham*. Dave provided the data and I will back him on the identity. Something is afoot with VDOT to help with the traffic issue at the harbor tunnel. And we have a mysterious pile of debris at water's edge topped by a “valve handle” like object at Willoughby Spit. Can we tie these clues together?

The obvious answers are, “yes”, “no”, “maybe”. The less obvious answer is, “how”? Well, more than once I have

found the new media to be our friend. A Google search focused on the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel turned up some interesting findings. Actually, I backed into this story as a result of searching for information concerning the possible widening of I-64 across the mouth of the roadstead. Widening is just a euphemistic term here as we are more correctly talking about adding another bridge/tunnel to augment the existing carrying capacity. While I mostly found news reports citing the possibility of a new tunnel they lacked depth and detail (it's amazing how reporters can fill column inches with repetition and innuendo), I did find two power point reports from VDOT concerning the tunnel and its future. I also found an article titled “A Mystery beneath the HRBT” on the blog of the Hampton Roads Naval Museum. Jackpot!

The article leads with a photograph of the “valve like” piece of debris being studied by none other than Marine Archaeologist Dr. John Broadwater. In the near distance is the access bridge of the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel. If that doesn't validate an article, nothing will. The rest of the caption informs us that “one or more ship hulks lie just off the beach.” This article also leads us to another article, this one written by Kent Mountford which appeared in the June 2010 of Bay Journal, in which he attributes Hampton Roads Naval Museum Curator Joe Judge as the first to identify the hull as “*USS Stringham*, a torpedo boat struck from the Navy list in 1913. While under tow to the scrap yard in 1923, it broke loose, became grounded and was abandoned.” (Bay Journal is the publication of the non-profit organization Bay Journal Media created to inform the public about issues and events that affect the Chesapeake Bay—check it out.) While Judge's statement gets modern accreditation, it seems odd that the locals didn't know and pass on the folklore. Small justification to the local transient population. An aerial photograph of the Spit, dated to the 1920's, shows a long slender hull and a barge resting on the bottom just offshore. It is Stringham. Today a concrete jetty abuts the barge and the stern of our torpedo boat.

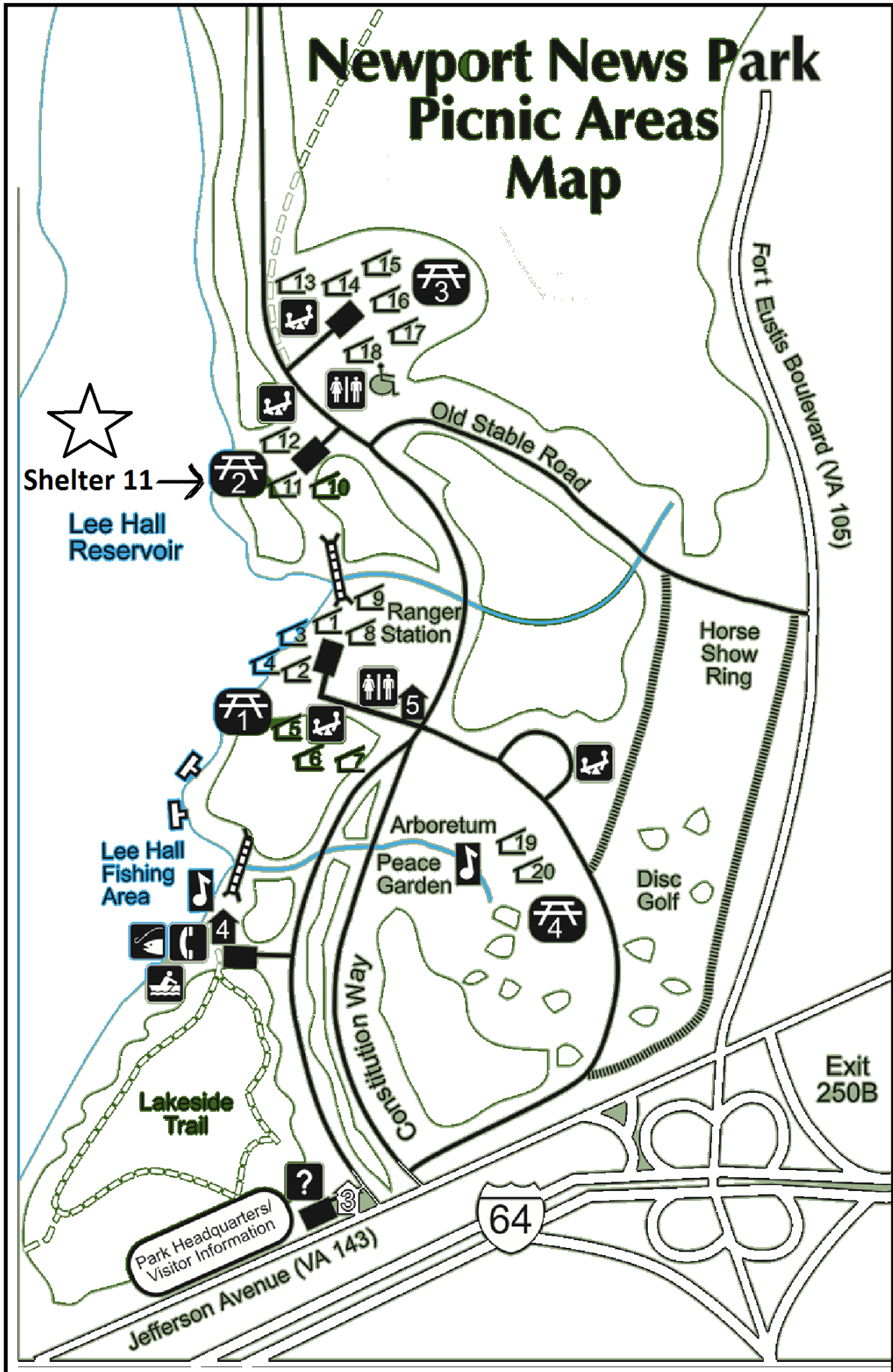
The VDOT report concerns adding another tunnel that provides four more driving lanes. Because of the location of Fort Wool immediately east of the south side tunnel island, the new tunnel and road bridge will be located inward of the existing tubes and bridges. As they wind around toward Willoughby Spit to land they will come dangerously close to the wreck of Stringham. It is entirely possible that the wreck will be removed as a consequence of the new road construction. We shall see...

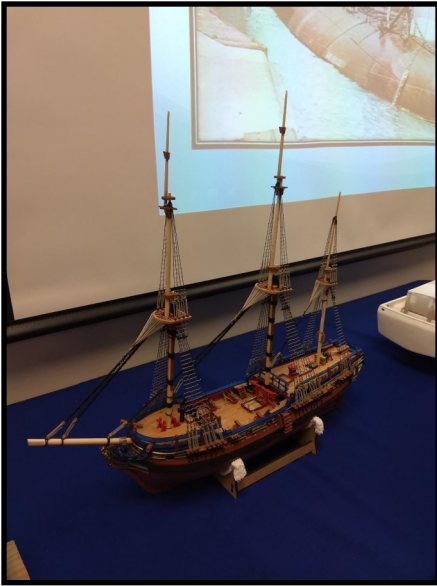
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From the Hampton National Cemetery Web Site

During World War II, on April 14, 1942, a German U-boat, U-85, was sunk by the U.S.S. Roper on April 14, 1942 off of Cape Hatteras. The entire crew was lost and the boat sank to the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean. On April 15, 1942, full military honors were provided for 28 German sailors from U-85 and they were interred at Hampton National Cemetery. The bodies and a few life jackets were all that surfaced after the submarine was sunk. On board the ship, when it sank, was an Enigma decoding machine. The machine was recovered from the ship during a dive in 2001 and is currently on loan from the German government to the Atlantic Graveyard Museum located in Cape Hatteras, N.C.

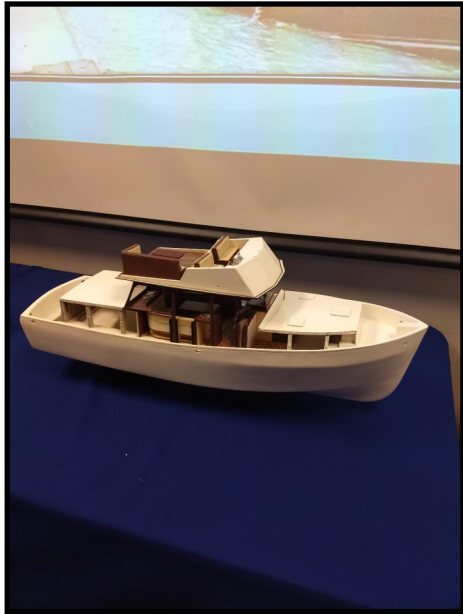
Newport News Park Picnic Areas Map





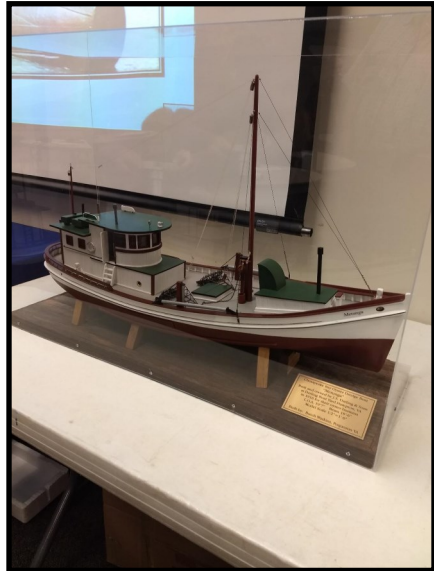
Lee Martin's
1776 Pegasus

Yves Pochard's
Grand Banks
Trawler



John Cheevers'
Tug
Susan Moran

Butch Watkins'
Metunga



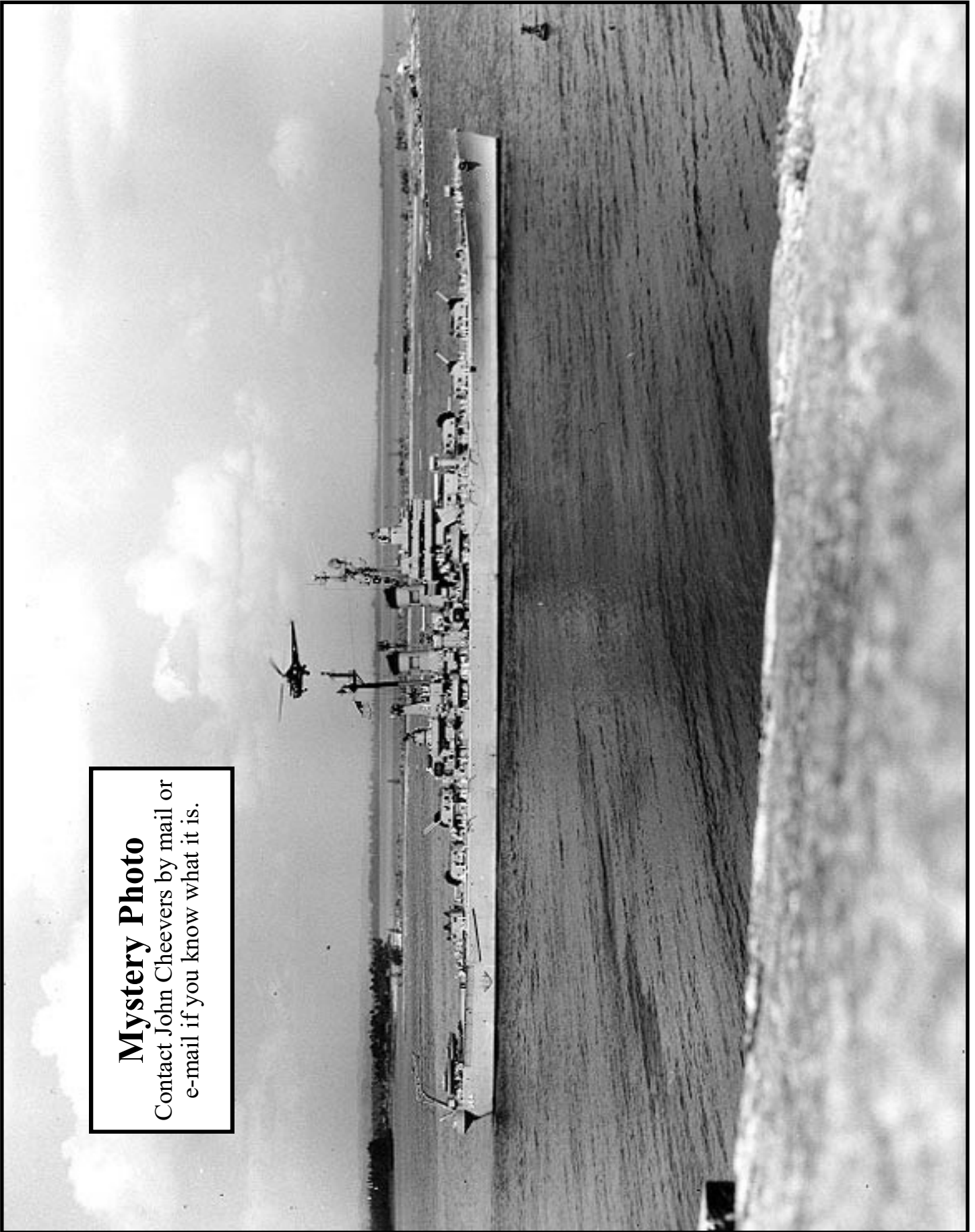
Starship
With fiber-optic
lighting

Tim Wood's
Whaleback
Freighter



Mystery Photo

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



NOTABLE EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

- 14 HRSMS Monthly Meeting
- 19 Talk Like a Pirate Day

OCTOBER

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

NOVEMBER

- 9 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum Presentation, Karol Budniak ---Making paper models look like wood

DECEMBER

- 14 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum Presentation:

JANUARY

- 11 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum Nomination of officers

FEBRUARY

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

MARCH

- 14 HRSMS Monthly Meeting:

APRIL

- 11 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

MAY

- 9 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

JUNE

- 13 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

JULY

- 11 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

AUGUST

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

WATCH, QUARTER AND STATION BILL



Skipper: Gene Berger (757) 850-4407
Mate: John Cheevers
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
August 10, 2019
Mariners' Museum

Guests: None

The meeting was called to order by Skipper, Gene Berger at 1010 hours. Due to the Purser's absence there was no Purser's report. Gene noted that there were no guests present. New member, Butch Watkins was given his membership certificate. There was no correction to the minutes. The Skipper complemented Greg Harrington on the changes to the HRSMS web site.

Old Business: The Skipper started talking about the September picnic when the late-arriving Webmaster entered the room. Greg Harrington said that he added a page for our 50th anniversary exhibit and pages for some additional member's models. John Cheevers circulated signup sheets for picnic attendance. Yves Pochard broached the subject of a mandatory meeting during the year. After discussion the consensus was that a mandatory meeting was not a good idea.

New Business: Tim Wood showed a hat with our logo on it. He said that the logo was available on polo shirts. He said that he would take orders for these items. Ron Lewis said that Stewart Winn is the only alternate for the Model Builder's Stand. He wanted to know if anyone else would like to serve as an alternate. The Skipper asked Ron if our banners could be hung on the back wall of the Model Builder's Stand. Ron said that he thinks he can make that happen. Tony Clayton talked about the difficulties of finding presenters.

Show & Tell: Tim Wood showed the progress on his whale-back freighter. John Cheever's showed the progress on his tug, the Susan Moran. Yves Pochard showed his Grand Banks Trawler with an ABS hull. Butch Watkins showed his buy boat, Metunga. Lee Martin showed his 1776 Pegasus. One of the museum's technical staff stopped by the meeting with his Imperial Star Destroyer model with fiber optic lighting, Gene asked it would be of any value to generate a list of the members' specific talents. Gene said that he would send an email to gather information for this list.

The meeting was adjourned to a presentation, "Whaleback Freighters", by Tim Wood.

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So what is that "valve wheel" thing really? I have two theories: The first is that it is the base ring of the after torpedo tube mount. It would be about in that location. It should be substantial material and would probably survive many years in salty water. But I really think it's the steering quadrant. You

guys tell me.

John Cheevers