

Hampton Roads Ship Model Society

Logbook!

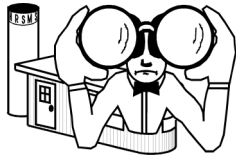


No. 408

WWW.HRSMS.ORG

June, 2020

From The Bridge



Mystery Photo



All members, all members, all members. This is Skipper. This is Skipper. Over.

This month I wish to give a simple shout out to the members from whom we've not heard in a long time. A number of you are maintaining your membership despite not having the time or ability to attend meetings, for which we are very grateful. But we'd enjoy your participation even more than the dues you pay, so please let us know what you're up to! If you're working on a model, what is it? How far along are you? What challenges have you encountered? What clever fixes did you come up with? What ingenious jig did you invent? Feel free to send me pictures, and I'll share them on our website. If you're not working on a model, feel free to tell us what you've been up to. Have you been traveling? Planting a new garden? Zoning out in a man cave?

This goes out on the web, and since I don't know what privacy concerns each of you may have, I'll use first names and last initials only. Fred O. has a rather long commute to the museum. It's on par with that of our Richmond members, but unlike them, he doesn't have any carpool options. Dean S. and Sean M. used to be regulars, but I've not seen either for a very long time. Mark H. has always been an infrequent attendee, but it seems longer than usual since he last graced us with his presence. Joe Q. is a relatively new member it would be great to hear from again. And I cannot recall the last time I've seen long time members Bob B. or Fred S. Please drop us a line, all of you. Call, text, email, snail mail...whatever suits you.

We've seen both Marty G. and Eric M. more recently than the rest, but a lot of water has flown under the bridge. How's it going, gentlemen?

We have some truly distant members in Gene A. and Patrick M. Gene has taken advantage of our recent online meetings. It would be great if Patrick or any of the previously mentioned members were to join the next one. If you're technophobic, consider getting a neighbor or relative to help out. You'll need a webcam to be seen, a microphone to be heard, but you can always simply listen in and participate by typing messages during the meeting.

I would guess we were averaging somewhere between 18 and 22 members per meeting before we were forced underground. But while going through the roster to find those I wanted to shout out to, I counted 36 members that I've seen at our meet-

Mystery Photo #407: I wonder what your initial reaction was when you first saw this Mystery Photo. Probably something like, "oh great, now I have to pick this ship's identification out of a gigantic pool of candidates—not!" Well I can say this; if you did, there were 273 of these beauties built to three "nearly indistinguishable classes, Caldwell (6 ships), Wickes (111 ships), and Clemson (156 ships)," to choose from. But who cares about subtle class differences when you have so many. We do! And at least four guys who responded do! We do because there is an interesting story to tell.

The photograph showcases an excellent portrait of a typical example of the universal "4 piper" destroyer built 'en masse' between 1917 and 1920 for the U.S. Navy's effort in The Great War. Mostly, they arrived too late to be of service, and their building continued for several years after the armistice to finish contracts and to keep people employed. Most were immediately laid up in basins and back bays to wait, to just wait, to disappear. Several did. But some, however, had the opportunity to distinguish themselves in U.S. Naval history several decades later—USS Ruben James, DD-245, and USS Ward, DD-139, come to mind. Our Mystery Photo subject comes to mind. Also, Corry, DD-334) comes to mind as it may be the last visible relic of this class, as it rests rusting away on the bank of the Napa River. And one more that is only famous in my memory: USS Leary, DD-158, sunk by a German U-boat in 1943, and famous for having James Mountain as a surviving member of her crew.

The general characteristics of the '4 piper' group are as follows, and should be considered as averages: Flush deck, canoe style hull; four, neatly arranged stacks giving the class its unofficial moniker; 1,154 tons displacement; 314.5' in length, 31.75' in width, 9.8' in draft; Armament is 4 x 4"/50 guns, 2 x 1pdr AA, 12 X 21" tt. 24,200SHP giving a speed of 35 knots.

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MEETING NOTICE

The June Meeting
Has Been Canceled



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What's Happening at the Museum

"Hop onto the Museum's website for the latest in virtual offerings. We have a ton of talent on our staff and for those of us with a particular interest in the sea and all that pertains to our experience on it, in it, with it, you'll surely find topics of interest and amazement! The Noland Trail, a beautiful 5-mile trip around Lake Maury and through The Park, will open on June 15th. Help celebrate with a jog around the trail (or part of it, if you're in as bad shape as I), and enjoy the natural beauty of the park and lake. We're currently planning to open the Museum as soon as our Governor, Doctor Northam, moves our state into Phase Three of a return to normalcy. For the six of us on the Ship Modelers roster, we're also taking steps to safely resume our interactive relationship with our visitors. More on this later."

Ron Lewis

Presenters Needed

If you are willing to give a presentation at a meeting, contact Tony Clayton.

Send photos of your current project to the Logbook editor for inclusion in the July Logbook.

tesaunders@verizon.net

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ings, either frequently or off-and-on. That's a pretty impressive number, and I thank you all for being active participants, which is what makes being in a club so enjoyable.

Lastly, I want to call to your attention that we have a member in hospice and another recovering from a heart attack. I will send out an email in case you're not aware to whom I am referring. I encourage you to reach out to them in some way to show your support. I think it would brighten their day.

Out.

MM

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With a big class to choose from, the odds are you would have a number of standouts, each with a good story to tell. And with four replies, we have a good chance of getting four of these stories—heck, I mentioned five of the ships and there are five good stories right there. But, lucky for you, three of our correspondents are on the same page, with the same, unified story to tell—but in different ways. Meanwhile, the third of the four replies seems to go down a different rabbit hole, as you will see. Let's see how the others meld, or if they meld, or if they reflect their current state of confinement.

John Wyld finished first and says that "As you have come to expect, I have burrowed into the May Mystery Photo to find all the nuances that make this fun to do. I will not drop the name first off because I know you need column inches for the Newsletter so I shall deliver." And I thank you. Charles Landrum crossed the line second saying "The game is afoot"! And he continued by saying that "[he] was lucky and this took 15 minutes, because solving a mystery photo is like solving the NY Times crossword puzzle - you have to get in the mind of the puzzle master. If you don't, you are toast." Rob Napier was third and he liked the image. You can tell by his opening statement: "I have said it before, and I'll say it again: I love it when I look at a new Mystery Photo and know right away exactly what it is." Finally, Tim Wood cleaned it all up by leading with the conclusion that everyone eventually comes to: "This month's mystery photo shows a Wickes Class Destroyer."

But getting there is most of the fun. John sets up the identification challenge this way: "I'll start with the backstory most of us can identify with - buying the first car for your teenager." (It didn't happen like that in my house, but OK!) "As you search high and low for a low mileage unit in good shape you have visions of the vehicle shined to within an inch of its life, lasting in pristine condition for twenty years and being your teenager's pride and joy." Sounds like the cool dad approach, not the 'here is Great Aunt Helen's hand me down, a low mileage, beige econo-barge with the mirrors sited half way down the fenders.' But, I digress while John continues: "You image hearing words of sincere gratitude from your child well into your seventies. You settle upon the unit in the Mystery Photo (MP), taken in the Panama Canal in May 1936, displayed at your local Shipyard On-Line store, and the photos show it to be gently used and looking fine with two dual exhausts that will make the other kids envious. At least until they see the smoke that belches out like an ALCO diesel locomotive." Uh, oh!

So, he thinks he's found that low mileage, one owner. "She was commissioned in January 1919, but at the time you buy here she has only seen about seven years of limited service. And the paint looks great, so you buy in June of 1936. Upon delivery, you notice that your teenager will be able to take 102 other friends along on those Friday Night trips, and you start to get this sinking feeling in your stomach." And the doubts set in. "It turns out the Wickes-Class "four Piper", USS BUCHANAN, DD-131, may not be the solution you thought it was at first. You just have a bad feeling this thing isn't the user-friendly first vehicle you'd hoped. You know your teenager is going to push it hard in spite of promises otherwise. You start looking forward to the day you can dump her onto some unwitting buyer."

As luck would have it, part two of the Great War sets in and you see, or seize, your opportunity. "Turns out, your luck

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is with you and just a few years later your government buys her back from you and presents her to the Brits in September 1940 as one of the first of the fifty Lend Lease four pipers for ASW work. She is renamed HMS CAMELTOWN. She starts her new life in Davenport, England 29 September and completes her conversions and refit 1 November." You're happy, the potential liability is gone, the teenage son is safe, and life goes on.

Then one day you read the paper and realize you made the right decision "On trials on 2 November, she collides with another ship, and repairs in Liverpool take until 24 November. She joins the Western Approaches Command for duty and is involved in another collision 2 December. Neglected maintenance by her teenage owner was the suspected cause of the excessive wear to the steering gear. After repairs, from April - September 1941 she was Dutch manned, before being returned to the Brits after a controversy as to who should name her. She joined the 27th Escort Group for West African convoy duty, but "defects" and repairs kept CAMELTOWN in the yards until Jan 1942."

Finally, her new owners come to the same conclusion and, since her 90-day warranty is up, prepare her for the demolition derby. "At this time the RN realized they had a hangar queen, but the Lend Lease Lemon Laws' refund time had passed. So the RN decided she needed a vacation, preferably to someplace in France. A future member of Monty Python suggested that nothing would make more sense than to send a British warship to Brittany in France."

And since it was a crazy idea, there being a war on and all, it was an easy sell. "The admiralty agreed in concept and selected the lovely port of St. Nazaire. In particular, they wanted "Crash" CAMELTOWN and a few escorts to throw a surprise party for the Germans at the major drydock in St. Nazaire, the only drydock outside Germany proper which was capable of supporting and servicing the Battleship TIRPITZ, currently lonely after her bud BISMARCK's sinking in May 1941. It was to be a grand surprise - a real "Burns Night" so to speak - complete with 250 commandos to ensure a festive atmosphere. CAMELTOWN was suitably modified by removing the two aft stacks and modifying the forward two with raked funnel caps to appear at night to look like a German destroyer. And in order to make her the 'el grande pinyata' she was planned to be, 24 naval depth charges were sealed into her bow compartments. The party was set for the night of 28/29 March, 1942. The CAMELTOWN was provided the challenge questions and answers for port entry by Bletchley Park. With Crash CAMELTOWN's history of hitting other ships she was a natural for the part. What could go wrong?" Indeed!

And the new owners of the vacation spot did their level best to deny access. "As it turned out, the Germans were in a pissy mood and there was some resistance before the small flotilla reached their destination. Still, the Crash CAMELTOWN did her best Demolition Derby drive and planted her bow into and upon the caisson sealing the drydock entrance. Commandos disembarked and much merriment ensued. Unfortunately, the automatic detonators for the explosives on CAMELTOWN didn't. At daylight, the Germans saw the destruction caused by the ramming of the drydock, and quite a few climbed aboard to survey the CAMELTOWN. Most had a short look before departing, no one apparently having a look below decks and spotting the 'cargo'. Instead they went to have a look at the commandos, most of which had been swept up after running out of

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AMERICAN NAVAL HISTORY

1834

June 30: Commandant Archibald Henderson is promoted to colonel. The authorized strength of the marine corps is increased to 63 officers and 1,224 NCO's and men. The marine corps is clearly part of the naval service. Congress appropriates the sum of \$5,000.00 for research on shipboard steam engines.

July 1: Mahlon Dickerson assumes office as tenth secretary of the navy.

1835

November 19: The sloop Vincennes anchors at Apra, Guam. The 1st U S naval vessel to visit Guam.

December 17: Marines are landed from the frigate Brandywine to protect the US consulate at Lima, Peru. They are withdrawn on January 24, 1836.

December 28: Dade Massacre: outbreak of the Second Seminole War. The ensuing conflict is the largest Indian War fought by the United States east of the Mississippi and the only one in which the navy will play a large role.

1835 Ends with no further actions.

Bob Moritz

THE ANSWER

The Answer to Mystery Photo 407

USS Buchanan at Balboa, Panama Canal Zone

18 May 1936

Nautical Term

Lateen - A triangular fore-and-aft sail yard, at deck level forward and high aft, and loosefooted. The term applies to both the sail and the rig. It is believed to have been named by both British and French sailors, and the word to be a corruption of the word Latin in both languages. This type of sail and rig have been in use in the Mediterranean from about the IX century.

Tim Wood

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ammo. Then at 11:30 AM, the automatic detonators finally did, and the subsequent destruction to the drydock put it out of commission for the rest of the war.”

That about covers the ship’s coup de guerre. Let’s see what the others can add to the story. Charles’ and Tim’s replies fall along more conventional

lines.

Charles notes that “The ship pictured is one of the 256 ships of the Wickes and Clemson Class "Flush Deck and Four Pipe" destroyers built during and immediately after WWI. By her paint and configuration the picture was taken later in the late 1920s or 1930s. By the terrain I guessed the Panama Canal Zone and in fact it was taken in Balboa at the south end of the canal. During this period a lot of these ships were in reserve (mothballs), thus narrowing the list of candidates, but not in a helpful way.” And it was less to Charles that he was not getting into the mind of the correct puzzle master. “I figured there had to be a local angle. The obvious one being ships built in NNSBD. Again a long list since both the Wickes and Clemson class were built in the yard. So I went looking for online lists, figuring John had some arcane catalog of shipyard vessels, like I have for Bath Iron Works. That led me to Wikipedia, but ah no lists. I also thought it might be a famous Four-stacker, which narrows the list considerably, and again I figured a local connection.” You all need to remember that I rarely, if ever, supply the photograph or know what it is before I receive my logbook. I play to the same handicap as the rest of you – John.

And I think Charles eventually found his local connection. “So at the end of the Wikipedia entry, there was a para-



HMS Campbeltown being converted for the St Nazaire Raid in 1941

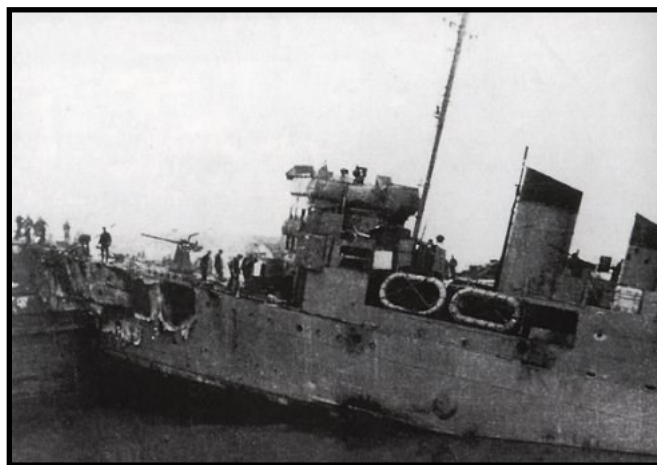
graph on Wickes Class ships in foreign service and the name HMS Campbeltown jumped out - the famed destroyer from the The St. Nazaire Raid. And in juxtaposition, her previous name - USS Buchanan (DD-131). I clicked on the link for the Buchanan and there was the mystery photo - USS Buchanan off Balboa, 18 May 1936, from the collections of the Naval Historical Center. Franklin Buchanan was of course the former commander of the CSS Virginia and later CSS Tennessee. So from a Cheevers’ perspective the ship was doubling interesting - fans of British as well as American naval heroes.

But Buchanan's real contribution was that he organized the Naval Academy and served as its first Superintendent (1845-47).”

And he fills in the blanks left in John Wyld’s response. “Interestingly USS Buchanan was a Bath Iron Works built ship! From the Dictionary of Naval Fighting Ships (DANFS) entry: "From 7 June 1922 until 10 April 1930 Buchanan was out of commission at San Diego. She then joined Destroyer Division 10, Destroyer Squadrons, Battle Force, and operated on the west coast in routine division, force, and fleet activities and problems. In the summer of 1934, after making a cruise to Alaska with ROTC Units aboard, she was placed in reduced commission attached to Rotating Reserve Destroyer Squadron 20 at San Diego. Again placed in full commission in December 1934, she resumed operations with Division 5, Destroyers, Battle Force. Buchanan was again out of commission at San Diego from 9 April 1937 until 30 September 1939. She was then refitted for action with Division 65, Destroyer Squadron 32, Atlantic Squadron, and from December 1939 until 22 February 1940 operated with the Neutrality Patrol and Antilles Detachment. She was then assigned to patrol in the Gulf of Mexico, operating out of Galveston, TX., and later off Key West and around the Florida Straits. She arrived at the Boston Navy Yard 2 September and then proceeded to Halifax, Nova Scotia, where on 9 September 1940 she was decommissioned and transferred in the destroyer-land bases exchange to the United Kingdom." Then she was commissioned in the Royal Navy as HMS Campbeltown.”

I think Tim’s search must have been a lot like mine, but maybe not as quick. I Googled the generic term “4 piper destroyer” and, viola, there was the Mystery Photo illustrating the article. Tim writes: “After a brief search via the internet and Jane’s, I was able to identify our mystery photo as HMS Campbeltown (I42), formerly USS Buchanan, built by Bath Iron Works, Bath, Maine. She had a typical inter-war record and was placed into the reserve in 1939. In 1940, she was one of 50 destroyers transferred to the Royal Navy as part of the Destroyers for Bases Agreement. Buchanan was transferred on September 3, 1940 and commissioned on September 9, 1940 at Halifax, Canada.”

We seem to have uncovered all the nuances that John was looking for. Now let’s look into that other rabbit hole....



HMS Campbeltown grounded on dry dock sill moments before detonating.

Rob, apparently likes a bit of intrigue, a bit of misdirection, and maybe 3 fingers of bourbon because he began his

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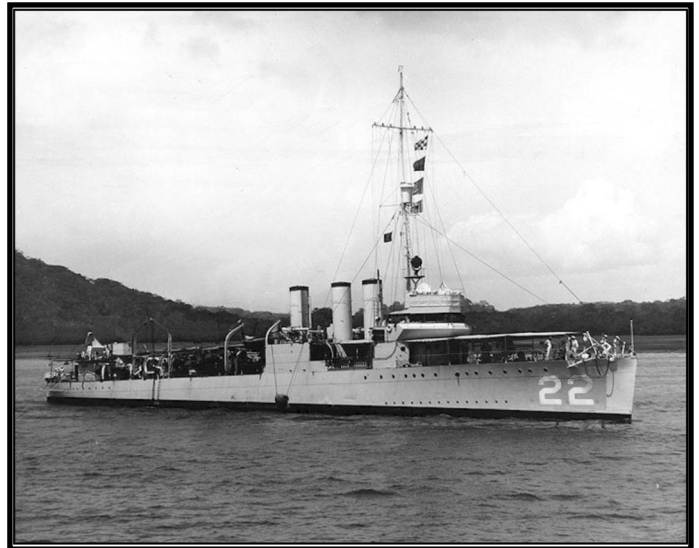
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reply in this cryptic way: "Someone in your crowd was very clever to add a fourth funnel, 2 sets of torpedo tubes, the entire after mast and its rigging, and the antenna array to the forward mast. He also removed the pennant numbers from the bow to try hide the fact that the MP is an image of one of those Wickes-class four-pipers that was converted during the Second World War to serve as high-speed destroyer minesweepers, mostly in the Pacific, I think." Oh no, It might be that Rob has assumption. It's either assumption or this is where the bourbon might be kicking in. He continues: "It was a good way to use up some of those old destroyers that hadn't gone to Britain in the Lend-Lease. Amazingly, though, the subject here isn't just a random Wickes-class can. The subject here is none other than USS Caine (DMS-22). Surely she was the most famous of that group, having starred in the great documentary "The Caine Mutiny."

Commenting on the photograph he has this to say: "I can't explain why Caine looks so clean and tidy --- sporting a large awning over the foredeck and those spiffy canvas covers on the bridge equipment. Knowing there would be other ships around --- why else would there be signals flying --- maybe Queeg wanted others to think he was running a tighter ship than he was --- got the men to tidy up everything --- include putting on whites for anchor duty! Looks like the ship is preparing to anchor, or maybe she is getting underway. If the latter, she better not head for sea too quickly --- the starboard motor whaleboat is still away --- although the accommodation ladder to the quarterdeck is stowed."

And he sent along photographic evidence with his reply. "At some point along the line --- probably back in the 1990s when I was more or less aggressively collecting maritime photos --- I found the original image that your club mate has obviously distorted. It was part of a collection at a dealer's booth at the thrice-annual monster Brimfield Flea Market in central Massachusetts. I attach a scan of it herewith." I'll have the editor publish this image with the essay so you can see for yourself. The problem is that you can tell where the image was doctored in several places. The stuff that Rob says was photo-shopped in, I would argue was actually photo-shopped out in Rob's print. At the bow in way of the top part of the hull number you can see where the lower sheer strake seem does not align with the rest of



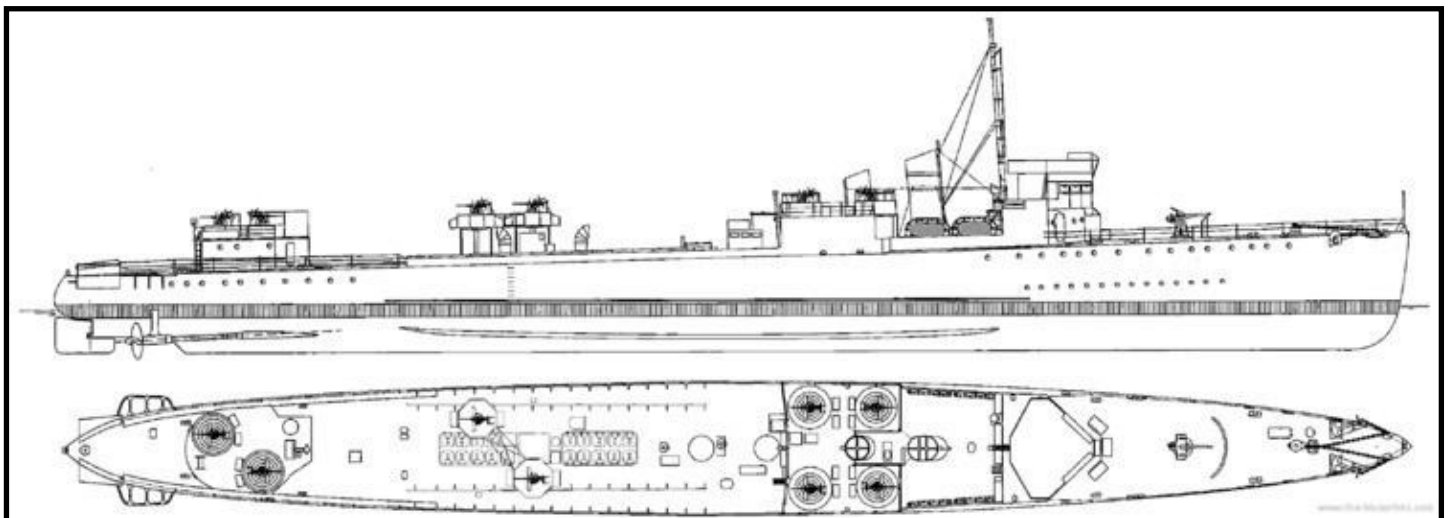
Rob Napier's mystery photo of our mystery photo

the hull strake. Also the lower part of the catenary of the anchor chain is clipped as well as half of its shadow against the hull. Doctored image for sure. Rob, I think the next time you hit the Brimfield Flea you'll have a story to tell and some questions to ask.

Since Rob's identification is in doubt, it's just as well that he could not identify the location. But he has this to say, "I don't know where or when the photo was made. At first, I thought it was in Pearl Harbor, but the background is all wrong, even for the west side, where destroyers moored. It certainly isn't Ulithi. It could be during a brief stop during her escort steaming around what was during the war called the New Hebrides but is now called Vanuatu. That was during the first half of 1944."

Rob, I hope this is all tongue in cheek....Herman Wolk must be shaking his head at you right now.

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What became of HMS Campbelltown? Following the explosion that destroyed the dry dock gate the remainder of the hull was swept into the dock as the sea flooded in. It is presumed that the remains were scrapped there. In support of this, John Wyld can “find no evidence that in accordance with the "Lend" part of "Lend Lease" that the Brits ever returned CAMBELTOWN to the US.” It seems that all that remains is the ship’s bell. “The ship's bell of HMS Campbelltown was given to the town of Campbelltown, Pennsylvania, as a gesture of appreciation towards the United States for the Destroyers for Bases Agreement program. This ship's bell was later lent by the town to the subsequent HMS Campbelltown, a Type 22 frigate, when she was commissioned in 1989 and was returned on 21 June 2011 after HMS Campbelltown was decommissioned.”

Finally, navy training in some of our players came to fore with these comments: Charles notes that “In the pho-

to, it looks like she has weighed anchor with the anchor detail securing the anchor. The fender may have been for another destroyer nested alongside. The flag hoist is her international call sign - NEQS - which in 1936 was phonetically pronounced Negat, Easy, Queen, and Sail. Note: the phonetic alphabet changed considerably in the 1930s and 1940s, as words that were hard to understand over radio were changed out.” And Rob chastises “a little lapse of protocol: this is a rare moment when neither the national ensign nor the jack are flying at either their in port or at sea positions. Bos'n's mate of the watch will pay for that!”

In the end, we identified the vessel, had some fun, and drove a skewer or two all to relieve the tension of current events. Remember: A mind is a terrible thing. Charles leaves us with this quote: “When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth?” — Sherlock Holmes

John Cheevers



Bill Brown's 1806 Revenue Cutter, Cheerful



Tom Ruggiero's HMS Liverpool



Ryland Craze's
Midway Longboat

Mystery Photo

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

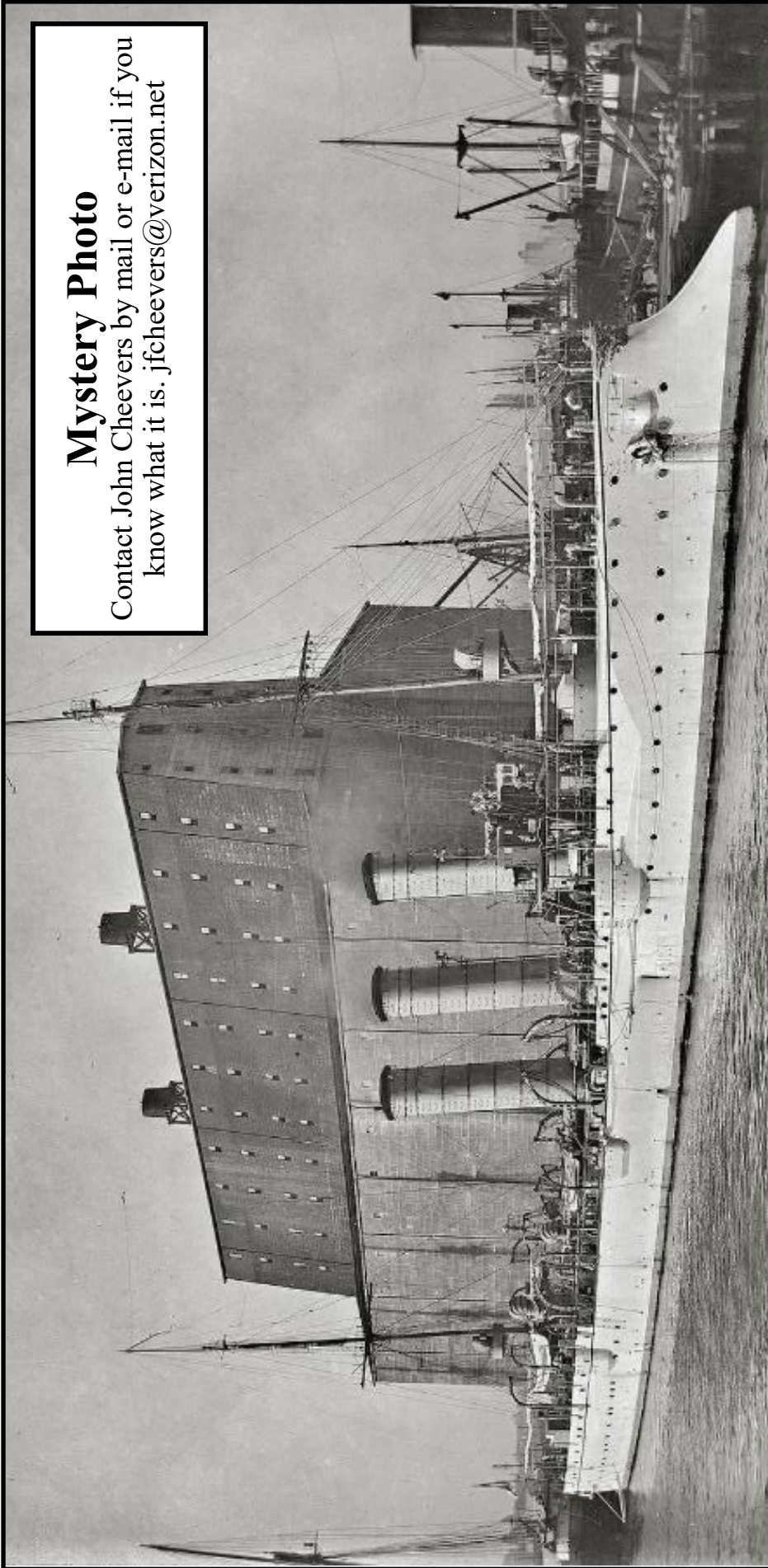


Photo submitted by Tim Wood

NOTABLE EVENTS

JUNE

- 13 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Canceled

JULY

- 11 HRSMS Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation: TBA

AUGUST

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

SEPTEMBER

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

OCTOBER

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

NOVEMBER

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

DECEMBER

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

JANUARY

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

FEBRUARY

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

MARCH

- 13 HRSMS Monthly Meeting:

APRIL

- 10 HRSMS Monthly Meeting:

MAY

- 8 HRSMS Monthly Meeting:

WATCH, QUARTER AND STATION BILL



Skipper: Greg Harrington (757) 218-5368
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) 218-5368
Photographer: Marty Gromovsky

MINUTES



The May HRSMS meeting was cancelled.

Greg Harrington facilitated a virtual meeting and here are his notes.

Guests:

Don Good - A model maker near Mathews, VA whose primary interest is Chesapeake Bay workboats. He is an interpreter at the American Revolutionary War Museum and a docent and board member at the Mathews Maritime Foundation.

Bill Brown - President of the Ship Model Society of New Jersey
Tom Ruggiero - Secretary/Treasurer of the Ship Model Society of New Jersey

Joshua Fichmann - Secretary of the Philadelphia Ship Model Society

Todd Wardwell. - Member of the Philadelphia Ship Model Society

Old business: None

New business: We discussed the possibility of sharing Zoom membership with other clubs. John Cheevers offered to lead the investigation into whether bylaws changes to cover online meetings are warranted. The skipper called on members to think of possible venues for an exhibit or competition. The skipper can recall only 5 hosted by the club during his 23 years of membership (50th anniversary, a small presence at a Portsmouth children's museum, a York County library, and the 2000/2005 NRG exhibitions). Ideas offered included a Williamsburg library, the science museum in Richmond, airport displays and other local museums. The topic will be revisited.

Ryland Craze gave the treasurer's report. Greg Harrington skipped the webmaster report as he had recently sent out an update via email. Show & Tell: Guest Joshua showed his workshop and in-progress model of the Black Pearl (of Hollywood fame). Tim Wood showed his newly-constructed steam box, which led to mention of PVC versions by John Cheevers and Greg Harrington, including steam sources. Others discussed heat bending options that included soldering irons, curling irons, and travel clothes irons. Gene Berger gave an update on his model of the Olympia, including a hose reel made from flattening soldering wire. Dave Chelmow showed his workshop and a Chesapeake Bay Sharpie model that is underway. Kevin Ray showed his newly acquired model of Roger B. Taney. John Proudley showed his recently completed Niagara and the Royal Caroline which he has just started planking. Gene Andes showed how much he's been able to fit in his new and downsized retirement quarters, including many of his current and previously built models.

Greg