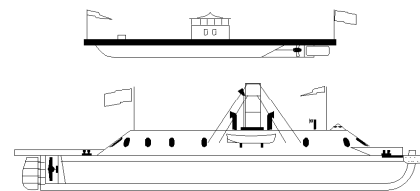


Hampton Roads Ship Model Society

Logbook



No. 198

DECEMBER, 2002

MINUTES



HRSMS Monthly Meeting

Date November 8, 2002

Host: Heinz Schiller

The meeting was called to order promptly at 2000 hours.

Corrections: It was noted by the skipper in the last paragraph of the minutes of the October meeting that Len Wine's name was omitted from the list of NRG Conference Committee members and that Bill Clarke's appointment as chairman was not noted. Eagle-eye Bob Krumpen observed that several dates for the monthly meetings in 2003 were not correct

A Purser's report was not given. A voice from the side of the room stated the Purser was home babysitting. The Clerk could not discern who made the remark.

Old Business: The 2005 NRG Conference was discussed. Notes are in a separate file.

New Business: The Skipper will relieve Graham Horne at the helm of the Education Program. The members expressed their appreciation Graham's efforts in promoting the presentation series.

Show & Tell: Bob Krumpen showed his work on a model of the Willie Bennett. Dave Baker Ryland Craze showed his Bluenose II. Dave Baker passed around pictures of a model under construction by a Captain in the Peruvian Navy. Bill Clake was presented a remembrance by the Bobbitts, three ships in a box including a bottle of glue.

The meeting was adjourned to a presentation, "Rigging" by Bob Comet.

Mystery Photo



Solution to Mystery Photo, *Logbook* No. 197: Well, well, well, nice photograph, an excellent copy, and a fine way to finish this column for 2002! This interesting submission from Dave Baker's photo vault provides just enough features to fool the average sleuth. No fewer than six of our esteemed ship experts joined forces to identify this vessel: In order of reply, Bob Comet, Rob Napier, Joe McCleary, Bob Krumpen, Alan Frazer, and introducing Bill Clarke. But can they agree on an absolute identification of the vessel? We shall see.

What are we looking at this month? Bob Comet lead all respondents by saying we have a "nice looking cruiser whose flag identifies her as Argentine." Rob Napier reports that it only took seven turns of the page until he found "a vessel that satisfies this month's Mystery Photo." He was thumbing through a source new to this column: M.J. Whitley's *Cruisers of World War Two*. Joe McCleary used his tried and true blind squirrel method before realizing that "Argentina had Italy build two cruisers, *Almirante Brown* and *Veinticinco de Mayo* in the late 1920s." Bob Krumpen says, "The Mystery Photo in *Logbook* 197 appears to be one of two Argentine cruisers launched in 1929." Alan Frazer claimed: "I have joined the steel navy crowd! (*A moment of silence, please!*) This photo shows a warship so pretty and graceful that I could not resist." Then drawing from personal experience, he has this to say: "First clue, of course, was the Argentine naval ensign. Even in fuzzy black-and-white there is no other that looks even close to that. I also remember it from entertaining the great training ship *Libertad* and her crew while I was a staff member at South Street Seaport in 1969." (*Alan, glad to have you aboard.*) Joe also pointed to and identified the Argentine naval ensign. Finally Bill Clarke checks in with this: "At first glance the ship appears to be an Italian cruiser possibly the *Trento* of the *Trieste*." I took the same path as Bill, beginning my search with the Italian Navy

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NOTICE

The December meeting has been rescheduled to
Friday, December 6, 2002

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before ending as he did with the Argentine Navy.



According to Whitley, these two cruisers, *Veinticinco de Mayo*, built at Leghorn, Italy, and *Almirante Brown*, which was built at the Odero ship yard in Sestri Ponente, Italy, were “authorized as part of [Argentina’s] 75 Million Gold Peso naval program of 1926.” A contract for construction was signed with the Italian Shipbuilding Company Odero Terni Orlando. The design was loosely based on the Italian *Trento*-class cruiser. What emerged from the building yard was essentially a smaller, lighter *Trento*. Based on a hull that displaced three-quarters that of *Trento*, the design used 65% of the shaft horsepower and carried somewhat less than 75% of the Italian cruiser’s armament. The design was notable in that it carried an odd-sized (7.5-inch) main armament, a distinction shared with the British *Hawkins*-class cruiser.

The design was much maligned by Western navies. As Bob Krumpen reports in his reply: “It is understood that these ships have proved a decided disappointment in service, too much having evidently been attempted on the displacement.” Perhaps, but its difficult to tell. Did the Western navies downplay the design because it used the Italian hull form, which was lightly built and optimized for service in the Mediterranean Sea? Was it the odd-sized gun? Was it a case of sour grapes, or was it the truth? Regardless of the justification, the design was highly regarded by the Argentineans and was considered a success. As Rob puts it: “They survived until 1962, 31 years old, a good and respectable age for a ship.”

Joe supplied the bulk of the class’ statistical data: “This ship had a displacement of 6,800 tons on a hull 545 ft long (OA), with a beam of 58 ft and a draft of 16 1/4 ft. She had a complement of 600 men. She could make 32 knots from six Yarrow boilers powering two Parsons turbines, producing 85K HP for two shafts. For armament she had six 7.5-inch guns, twelve 3.9-inch AA guns and ten 40-mm AA guns, as well as six 21-inch torpedo tubes in two triple mounts. She was very lightly armored with only one inch on the deck and 2 3/4 inches on the sides. Both of these characteristics are very Italian.” In addition, these ships carried a seaplane.

Sometimes when people buy a dog they get a purebred, one with pedigree, papers, and show-dog quality, and sometimes they get a mutt. The same is true with what were once termed second and third world countries. Not to malign the nations involved, but those countries with little or no indigenous shipbuilding/manufacturing capability usually built navies around ships purchased and built abroad fitted with machinery, armament, and controls that are a true mixed breed. This is the case with our Mystery vessel—a true

melange of parts. The hull is Italian. The machinery and main armament are British. The main fire control appears to be Italian, at least the hoods are. And the aircraft in the photograph is from the United States.

One wonders how they kept it all working. Perhaps that is the reason why we see very few electronics onboard. Only Bob and Joe mention this. As Bob put it: “It is interesting to note the total lack of radar antennas on the gun directors or anywhere else for that matter. The most sophisticated electronics I see in the photo is a radio direction finder abaft the forward main battery director.” Joe concurs but states that double loop RDF antenna is an upgrade from WWII.

Finding and identifying this class of cruiser was relatively easy. The only detour to this point took two of us through the Italian navy. But now that we are on track, can we narrow the time line to help identify the correct vessel? Most of the responses collectively put the time frame between the end of WWII and 1962. A few, narrow that gap by several more years but not by all that much. Bob Comet, Rob, Joe, and Alan mention the plane by name and type, the Grumman (J2F) Duck. Eagle eye Joe refined it a bit calling the type a J2F-6. He calls it a Grumman but fails to mention that the Columbia Aircraft Corporation built the “6’s”. Bob Comet specifically says that the airplane was landed ashore before 1957.

Rob was the only player to mention the differing main mast details. Our Mystery photo shows a cut-down main mast. The Photo in Whitley’s book as well as photos in Conway’s and in my 1931 Janes’ show a tall tripod main mast with a single pole upper mast.

Here is what I learned: As built these ships carried an aircraft catapult a-la the Italian system; that is on the bow just ahead of No. 1 turret. Whitley mentions that in 1939 a new catapult, of the Rapier Ransome type, was installed at the position shown in the mystery photo. More importantly he states that in 1944 the single, king-post crane was replaced by a “new type” (this modification permitted the removal of the tall main mast,) and at the end of the 1940’s a type 268 radar was fitted. Since no radar is visible in our Mystery photo but the ‘new type crane is, we should be comfortable narrowing the time line to the years between 1944 and 1949.

With the time line narrowed, we can turn our attention to identifying the actual ship in the class. Joe, Bob Krumpen, and Alan all refer to the 1946 issue of Janes’ as the year “new” pictures appeared. The pictures in the ’46 Janes’ are dated, but more importantly, show the vessel in the same state as our Mystery photo. Both Joe and Alan think our Mystery and the ’46 Janes’ image of *Almirante Brown* come from the same series. The sharp-eyed observer should have noticed the towline in our Mystery photo. Both Joe and Alan point this out. The vessel is either beginning (Joe’s guess) or ending (Alan’s guess) a tow in our photo. Joe points to the condition of the tow, while Alan speaks of the differing shadows as the ship turns to port. I think she is beginning the tow, and I base this on the fact that the anchor has a line on the forward fluke to help turn it as it retracts through the

(Continued on page 4)

The Answer

Mystery Photo 196- Big horn IX 207, ex AO 45 –Q ship,
EX USCG WAO 124

Mystery Photo 197- Argentina / Almirante Brown, 1949
No photo reference was provided

Photo Not
Available

NOTABLE EVENTS

DECEMBER

- 6 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Jack Bobbitt
Presentation, "Pewter Casting", Joe McCleary

JANUARY

- 10 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Bob Comet
Nomination of Officers
Presentation, "Why We Are Doing this", J. Bobbitt

FEBRUARY

- 14 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Dave Baker
Election of Officers

MARCH

- 8 Monitor Day, Mariners' Museum
14 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: South Side Bunch

APRIL

- 11 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Dean Sword

MAY

- 9 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Bill Clarke
17 International Small Craft Center Opening,
Mariners' Museum

JUNE

- 13 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Alan Frazer

JULY

- 11 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: McCleary, Wine

AUGUST

- 8 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting:

SEPTEMBER

- 12 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting:
20 Festival in the Park, Mariners' Museum
27 Scientific & Navigational Instrument Exhibition
Opening, Mariners' Museum

OCTOBER

- 10 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting:

NOVEMBER

- 14 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host; Heinz Schiller

Thanks

The members would like to thank the Heintz and Mareke Schiller for hosting the November meeting.

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hawse fitting. Alan and Joe agree on our Mystery vessel. Joe sums it up this way: Argentine cruiser *Almirante Brown*, 1946.

The players cited three main sources in their responses: Various volumes of *Janes' Fighting Ships*, Conway's *All The Worlds Fighting Ships 1922-1946*, and the above mentioned *Cruisers of World War Two*. In these three sources we find the seeds of deception and the nuggets of truth. As Dave Baker once said, and I have to paraphrase because I don't remember the exact quote, These sources are rife with errors. Luckily these errors are primarily in the

Next Meeting

Date: December 6, 2002

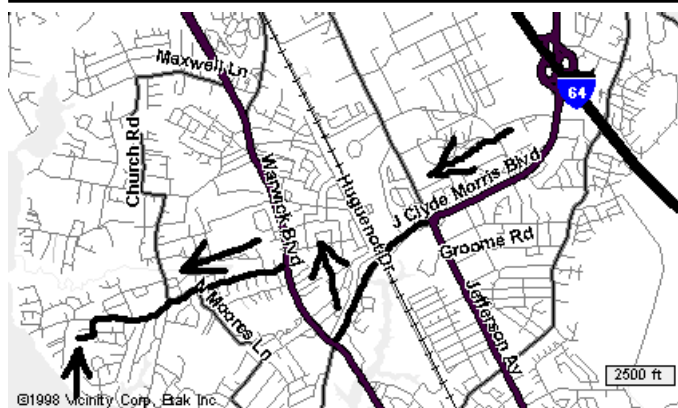
Time: 2000 Hours

Location: 69 Queens Court
Newport News, Va.
(757) 599-0557

Host: Jack Bobbitt

From I-64 go west on J. Clyde Morris Boulevard to Warwick Boulevard. Turn right on Warwick, proceed to Hiden Blvd. Turn left on Hiden. After Hiden Blvd. narrows, turn left on James Landing Road and proceed to Queens Court. Turn right on Queens Court. Number 69 will be several blocks down Queens Ct. on the right.

Please call if you are planning to attend.



**WATCH, QUARTER
AND
STATION BILL**



Skipper: Bob Comet (757) 934-1279
1st Mate: Len Wine (757) 566-8597
Purser: John Cheevers (757) 591-8955
Clerk: Tom Saunders (757) 850-0580
Historian: Len Wine (757) 566-8597
Editors: John Cheevers (757) 591-8955
Bill Clarke (757) 868-6809
Tom Saunders (757)-850-0580

tabular data, but, to a lesser extent, they reside in the notes and comments as well. Luckily the camera doesn't lie. It's always interesting to see how these 'errors' are employed in the formation of coherent responses aimed at making a convincing argument.

Happy Holidays to all!

John Cheevers