



Forecastle Report

Newsletter of the Midwest Model Shipwrights

January 2009

● Scuttlebutt ●

Commodore **Sid Wotman** opened the meeting with a great turnout of 31 hands. First order of business was to introduce our newest member, **Robert Sykes**, Wood Dale, IL, and welcome him aboard.

The following board was nominated for 2009:

Commodore - Sid Wotman; Flag Captain - Tim Riggs; Purser - Ken Goetz; Ship's Clerk - Jim Merritt; Editor - John Mitchell; Photographer - Leon Sirota

The nominated board was elected by unanimous vote of all present. **Bob Filipowski** was also awarded the title **Purser Emeritus** in recognition of his continuing *Tri-Club* book keeping duties.



Sid



Tim



Ken



Jim

Bob Filipowski announced that the second "Planking Workshop" is scheduled for 1-17-09 at **Ray Oswald's** home. Those interested should give Bob a call at 847-394-0757.



John



Leon

Members were informed that **dues** will remain at **\$20** for 2009 and should be paid no later than our March 2009 meeting. Still a great value for all the good information you can pick up at meetings and in the Forecastle Report!

We regret to inform you that our mate, **William Kiscellus**, passed away in October 2008. Bill was a member since 1993 and, although not active at our monthly meetings since his move to the Rockford area, had maintained an active membership and read our newsletter with great joy. Our sympathies go out to his wife Laurel and family on their loss.

OFFICERS

Commodore (President) - Sid Wotman..... (847) 680-1256
Flag Captain (Vice Pres) - Tim Riggs.....(847) 697-9552
Ship's Purser (Treasurer) - Ken Goetz(847) 678-4249
Ship's Clerk (Secretary) - Jim Merritt..... (847) 888-3882
Signals Officer (Editor) - John Mitchell(847) 392-2259
M. Chief (Photographer) - Leon Sirota(847) 541-6285

January Meeting Notice

"FINISHING YOUR MODEL"

(e.g. Weathering, Painting, Mounting, etc.)
- A Roundtable -

Come prepared to share your special techniques and learn a few new ones, to boot. If you have an example of your favorite result, bring it along to help highlight the discussion. The more you share, the more you'll gain in return.

Second in our new series, *Historical American Warships*, features the *USS Bonhomme Richard*. The "Ocean Technology Foundation", a nonprofit based in Groton, CT, has spearheaded a search to find the remains of the *Bonhomme Richard*. For more information on this project visit their web site at www.oceantechnology.org. Read about her history on page 5.

Our next meeting will be at 7:15 p.m. Wednesday,
January 21, 2009

At the Community Presbyterian Church
407 Main Street in Mount Prospect

● Pizza Party & Flea Market ●

Yes, mates, there is a Santa Clause...and he was with us at our pizza party in December. If you don't believe it, just look at the photos and you'll see him (right) in the guise of Rich Kuenstler.



The pizza was finger licking good, as Kurt Van Dahm proves in our sneak photo on the left.



In fact, there were so many good things to eat and drink that carrying everything back to the table was a real challenge, as Tim Riggs demonstrates here.

● Ships on Deck ●

Bob Ivan had a need for some post-operative wrist therapy and thought it would be fun to build a balsa stick-model airplane. The tie-in to ships was the name:



“Supermarine Spitfire”. Then he got really inspired and decided to apply a 0.007” aluminum skin to it rather than the traditional tissue paper.

The results were very impressive and begs the question whether one couldn't cover a ship's hull in the same manner. The answer seems to be yes! Thanks, mate.

Tony Sergios has made significant advancement on his “Model Shipways” kit of the *HMS Bounty* launch. Planking was completed then stained inboard and painted outboard. The model presents a very outstanding appear-



ance, in a good size scale. Flags and ship's name on the transom were two questions Tony questioned. Anyone having any advice on these please contact Tony.

Helmut Reiter brought in his *La Belle* (1:36) with the hull all complete and a start on the masts and rigging underway. To make his work on rigging a bit easier, he first built a cradle to hold the hull rather than going to a permanent base plate - this made the positioning more flexible.

Rigging work is being done with Morope. To seal the cut edges of this rope, Helmut found that the best product was a “Locktight” superglue in gel form. This was easier to use than liquid superglues in that it didn't run or become over absorbed by the rigging line, which made them



stiff. Of real interest this month was the really beautiful job he did on the stern lantern. His description of his methods would make a total chapter in any modeling book. From a piece of acrylic rod stock he first filed down the outer shape then restored the clear surface with polishing compound. Next he hand cut vertical grooves in the surface half the diameter of brass wire he was using for the mullions. Then he used his lathe to cut the horizontal lines. After annealing his brass wire to soften it, he first glued the horizontal frames in a continuous strip. The vertical peaces were cut and added last. Lastly, top and bottom covers were turned from brass. Great work!



Tim Riggs picked up an “Iron Shipwright” resin model kit of the *USS Panay PR-6* (1:192) Yangtze River Gun Boat at a recent NRG conference. Historically, this was the

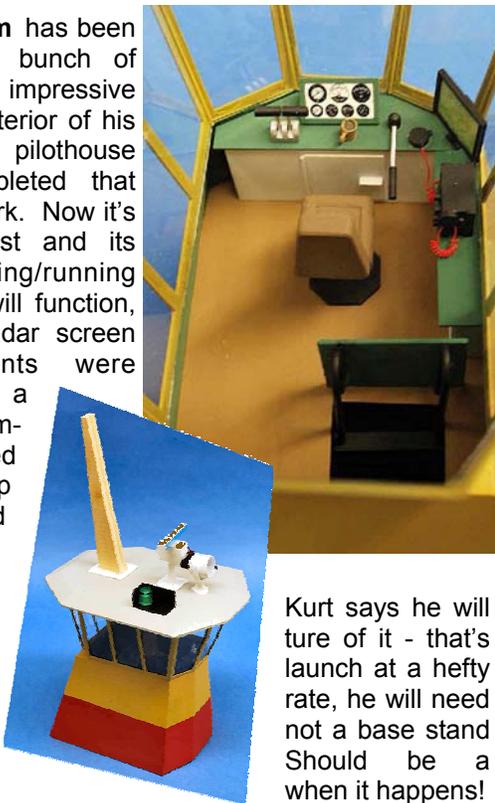


first US warship sunk in WWII (1937) during action against the Japanese army of occupation in China. The kit presented a lot of sanding work and didn't have very clear plans as to how to mount various parts. The story of her action was very fascinating. Thanks, Tim, for all the extra background. Look forward to seeing it complete.

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Ships-on-Deck, continued from page 2

Kurt Van Dahm has been focusing on a bunch of small but very impressive details in the interior of his Redondo Tug pilothouse and has completed that phase of his work. Now it's on to the mast and its mounted towing/running lights - which will function, of course. Radar screen and instruments were scanned from a sheet of examples purchased at a hobby shop and scaled down on his PC to fit. When it is all finished, show us a pic—because it will be 65 lbs. At that beautiful event



Kurt says he will launch it - that's a hefty rate, he will need a base stand when it happens!

Robert Sykes showed us the "Model Shipways" "Block Buster" block shaper tool that he modified—it was necessary to secure the rotating drum to its driveshaft by inserting a pin, as the suggested epoxy attachment didn't hold. The results of his efforts were very impressive, as the tool really did a fine job of turning square blocks into nicely rounded ones. Thanks for the tip, Mate. The kit sells for about \$16.95 on the "Model Shipways" web site.



Bruce Hoff brought in a really fine display of a variety of cannon barrel types used during the 1862 Civil War battle of Shiloh, TN. Brass turnings were beautifully done and the mounted display was really first class. Thanks, mate.



See *Ships-on-Deck*, Page 4

Party, continued from page 1

In addition to the eats, we also had a fine flea market to attract our attention. Books, tools and kits were on offer and everyone found some treasure to call their own. Thanks to all who brought their "stuff" in to sell—it really helped make the evening.



Rounding out our evening, **Tim Riggs** provided us with a fascinating presentation on three maritime museums he visited at Toulon, France, Dubrovnik, Croatia and Barcelona, Spain. The model collections we saw were really impressive, especially the large scale models built for training new sailors. Photo at left is of the "Museum of the Marine", Toulon, France.



Of interest in Barcelona was the interior architecture of the museum building, shown here at right, which imitated the construction of a ship's hull.



The main exhibit in Barcelona was the full size model of a "Royal Galley". You can get some idea of the scale of this craft by the figures shown at the lower right in the photo. And you can again see the interesting ceiling vaulting.

Smaller craft were also displayed in plenty - a good example being that of a very early ship, *Coca de Mataró*, which certainly must have pre-dated Columbus' fleet.



One of the central displays at the museum in Dubrovnik was the ornamented figurehead from the sailing vessel *Abraham* set among a number of historical sailing artifacts.

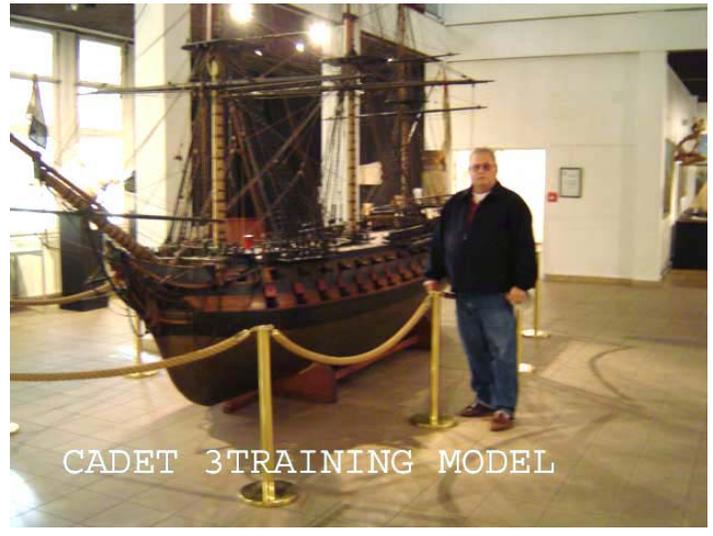
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Party, continued from page 3



Below, Tim views the large scale training model, which had working rigging. Again, our thanks to Tim for adding the great entertainment to our party.



CADET 3 TRAINING MODEL

Ships-on-Deck, continued from page 3

In late-breaking news, we have received the latest photos promised to us by **Kurt Van Dahm** showing his *Redondo Tug* in completed form. As soon as there is some open water, Kurt will let her slide down the ways. Nice going mate. The best result imaginable on this model—period!



NAPOLIAN'S BARGE



USS SC-449

By Bob Filipowski

Recently, I came across a brief story about an obscure experiment conducted during WWII by the US Navy. At the time the United States was preparing for the invasion of Japan. With the lessons learned by the Pacific Fleet at Okinawa, every possible means of minimizing the loss of ships and personnel was being explored.

One such experiment involved the **USS SC-449**. Laid down 10 July 1939 as **PC-449** by the Luders Marine Construction Co., Stamford, CT; she was launched, 14 May 1940, and commissioned **USS SC-449**. This vessel was



one of three Submarine Chasers built in a design competition. Although she possessed 50% more stability than the other prototypes, the contract would eventually be awarded to another firm, thus making her a one-of-a-kind.

She would spend most of the war developing new weapon systems and tactics that could be conducive to

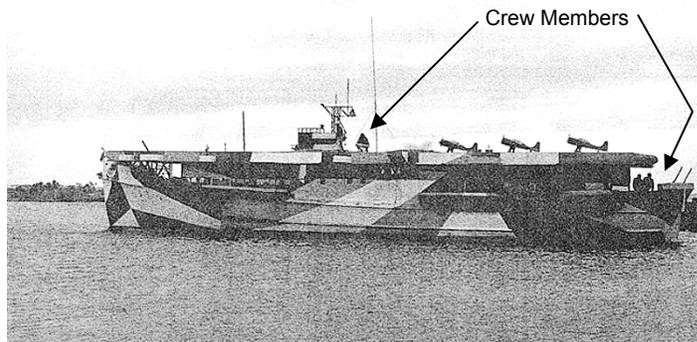
vessels of her type. One such weapon was an anti submarine rocket. It would be the prototype for the later Mouse Traps and Hedge Hog rockets. A 30 lb. charge of TNT was carried in the war head with a contact detonator on top. The



rocket charge was carried in the tail pipe. Most of the time they ignited, but once in awhile they didn't. Then some

poor sailor had to go forward, and throw it overboard!

In early 1945, **USS SC-449** was selected by the Navy to be converted into a mock CVE-9 Class *Escort Aircraft Carrier* to be used in the invasion of the Japanese home islands. It was "449's" stability that made her desirable for this conversion. Her deck was stripped and rebuilt with plywood to look like a CVE, and three scaled down aircraft were installed on her "flight deck". At a length of 110 feet, the net result was a craft only about 1/5th the size of



an actual jeep carrier. You get some sense of scale from the above photo. Three crewmen can be seen, with one of them crouching on the flight deck.

Never the less, the Navy liked what they saw, but tests showed that she was too top-heavy, so the idea was shelved. Not too long after that the atom bomb was dropped, and the war was over.

No mention is made as to how these vessels would have been used, but it's probably safe to assume that the Navy hoped that enemy pilots would mistakenly give up their lives and aircraft trying to destroy these decoys. You can't

help but wonder whether these craft would have been remote controlled since the chances of a crew surviving such an attack would have been slim and none! Sold and struck from the Navy Register on 29 July 1949, she worked as an *Oceanographic Research Vessel*



at Texas A&M Marine Department until being purchased by Service Marine Inc. of Galena, TX for use as quarters for dredge crews. The former **SC-449** was eventually scrapped in 1974. ❖

● Planking Workshop ●

If you had to name one facet of our hobby that causes the most novices to walk away, it would probably be hull planking. Many newcomers become frustrated with their inability to make the planks go where they want them to go. These modelers know they have a problem, but they don't know how to fix it. **Ray Oswalt** and **Bob Filipowski** decided to do something about that.



L-R: Leon Sirota, Michael Black, Tony Sergios

The first planking hands-on workshop was held on December 6th and 13th at Ray's home, with Tri-Club members **Michael Black**, **Bob George**, **Peter Pennigsdorf**, **Leon Sirota**, **Tony Serigos**, **Doc Williams** and **Robert Wicklander** in attendance.

This was not a spiling class. Ray and Bob have developed a curriculum that focuses on the use of kit supplied planks. Using half-hull training aids, hull preparation, planking theory, stealers and drop planks were discussed.

Everyone was shown how to determine plank proportions, install garboard and broad strakes, and lay out a 1/2 check



L-R: Bob George, Robert Wicklander

stealer at the stern.

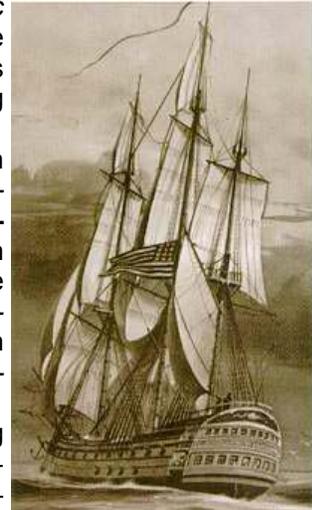
With the next workshop scheduled for January 17th, Ray and Bob are hopeful that things will progress a little more smoothly the second time around. They both feel that this was a learning experience for them as well. ❖

● USS Bonhomme Richard ●

This month's historical ship, the first *USS Bonhomme Richard*, was formerly the *Duc de Duras* and became a frigate in the Continental Navy thanks to a loan by the French King Louis XVI on February 4, 1779.

Her American Captain, **John Paul Jones**, renamed her *Bonhomme Richard* to honor **Benjamin Franklin**, the American Commissioner at Paris whose almanac, *Poor Richard's Almanac* had been published in France under the title *Les Maximes du Bonhomme Richard*.

Jones' squadron, having sailed from the (Fr) port of Lorient on August 14, 1779, encountered the (Br) Baltic Fleet of 41 sail under convoy of *HMS Serapis* (44) and *Countess of Scarborough* (22) near Flamborough Head.



Builder: Randall & Brent Shipyards
Launched: 1765
Acquired: 4 February 1779
In Service: 4 February 1779
Out of Service: 25 September 1779
Fate: Sank in battle

Tons burthen: 998 tons
Length: 152 ft
Beam: 40 ft
Draft: 19 ft
Complement: 375 officers & ranks
Armament: 28 x 12-pound smooth-bore, 8 x 9-pound smoothbore.

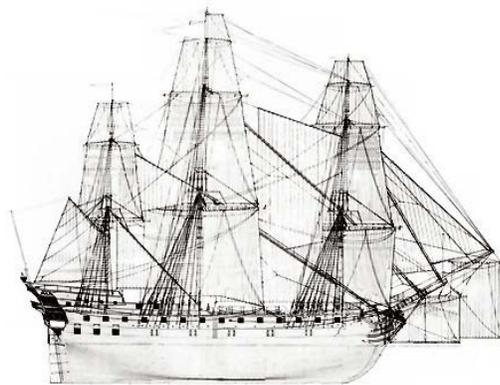
At 18:00 *Bonhomme Richard* engaged *Serapis* and a bitter engagement, the Battle of Flamborough Head, ensued during the next four hours that cost the lives of nearly half the American and British crews. At first, British victory seemed inevitable as the more heavily armed *Serapis* used its superior firepower to rake *Bonhomme Richard* with devastating effect, killing Americans by the score. However, Jones eventually succeeded in lashing the two ships together, nullifying his opponent's greater maneuverability. An attempt by the Americans to board *Serapis* was repulsed, as was an attempt by the British to board *Bonhomme Richard*. Finally, after another of Jones' squadron joined in the fight, the British captain surrendered at about 22:30. *Bonhomme Richard*, shattered, on fire, and leaking badly defied all efforts to save her and sank at 11:00 on September 25, 1779. John Paul Jones sailed the captured *Serapis* to the United Provinces for repairs.

Though *Bonhomme Richard* sank subsequent to the battle, the outcome of the battle convinced the French crown of the wisdom of backing the colonies in their fight to separate from British authority. The defeat of *Serapis*, no less in home waters, stung the British admiralty.

This article was compiled from a Government Publication in the public domain, "Dictionary of American Fighting Ships". Editor



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