



# San Diego Ship Modelers' Guild

2960 Chicago Street, San Diego, Calif. 92117

Volume 12

Number 11

**November Meeting: Friday, November 18, 1988**

**7:30 P.M. Social 8:00 P.M. Meeting**

**Orlop Deck of the *Star of India***

**Bring a Model !!**

## Notes from the Oct. Meeting

The notes from the October meeting are somewhat sketchy, due primarily to the fact that your editor was out of town on business, Purser, Bob Hanley was ill and First Mate Roger Smith could not make it. This left our intrepid Master, Mike Rivera to fend for himself. I understand that Mike had as his suggestion of the month, a method of making simple wooden blocks, but I have no further details. There were apparently a few models present. Doug MacFarland is one of the few people who really takes our motto to heart, and as a consequence he can usually be relied upon to "bring a model". In this case the model was "Hotspur", which is coming perilously close to being finished. Bob Crawford and Al L'heureux brought in the bridge structure of Bob's contract model of *U.S.S. Wasp*, showing off in particular some of the photo-etched brass fittings that Al & Bob have been working on. I'm also told that one of our members donated a jewellers lathe to the Guild. I do not have the name of the donor at this writing, but will provide proper recognition in the next issue of the newsletter. To whoever you are, mystery donor, on behalf of the Guild, many thanks for your generosity. Also Bud Bailey displayed some more of his work on match stick models. That's all the G2 I was able to glean about the October meeting. Hope I did not miss any other important items.

## November meeting

Traditionally the November meeting is the one in which candidates for next years officers are nominated. In the past we have done this in a variety of ways, sometimes holding nominations and elections on the basis of a hand vote on the same night. In many instances this became a moot point, since there was only one candidate for each position!! We're hoping this year will be different however, and we will have more than one candidate for each office. In discussing this with Mike we decided that if we can get at least two candidates for each office at the November meeting we will print a ballot in the Dec. newsletter and ask members to either mail it in before the Dec. meeting, which will be our Christmas party meeting, or bring it with them to the party. We will count the votes and announce the new slate of officers at the party. With regard to the nominations, everyone should make an effort to be at the Nov. meeting. Remember, **you don't have to be present to be nominated!** (You do have to be present to decline!!)

November is also the month for renewing memberships. That's a euphemism for "its time to pay your dues". In connection with the payment of dues we're requesting that members fill out and return the information sheet found at the end of this issue. This will help build a membership database and publish a revised roster in a future issue of the newsletter. Anyone who does not renew their membership by Jan. 1, will be dropped from the mailing list for the newsletter, (honorary members excepted of course). Dues may be mailed in with the information sheet or paid at the Nov. or Dec. meetings.



November 1, 1988

San Diego Ship Modelers Guild  
c/o Doug Smay  
/redacted/

Gentlemen:

On behalf of Captain Peter Branson and the Maritime Museum Association of San Diego, I would like to thank all San Diego Ship Modelers Guild members who participated in the first Museum/Guild Work Party.

A majority of the steam yacht MEDEA's brightwork was restored to its new luster through much effort by those taking part. Many comments have been heard specifically about her brass. Hopefully, on the next "closed day" for the Mission Bay Pond, we will be able to complete the job.

Thank you again.

Sincerely,

BOB CRAWFORD  
Curator of Models

**The Role of U.S. Fleet Submarines in World War Two** by John Turner  
(Continued from Oct. newsletter)

On the afternoon of Dec. 7, 1941, Admiral Robert English, Commander Submarines Pacific, had issued to his submarines at sea, the order to wage unrestricted submarine warfare on the Japanese Empire. From that point forward, the Japanese were unable to rely on any respite from the threat posed by U.S. submarines. The aim of American strategy was to eliminate Japan's ability to wage war by eliminating its transport capability. Realizing that merchant shipping was Japan's sole means of transporting troops, war supplies and raw materials among its far flung island empire, American submarine skippers were ordered to give attack preference to these ships over Imperial Navy warships. It thus became, in theory, preferable to attack a tanker rather than the destroyers which protected it. However, this early period of submarine warfare was inconclusive; American submarine captains began to have serious doubts about their abilities as they experienced an increasing number of failures with their primary weapon, the torpedo.

The Mark 14 torpedo, with which most American submarines were equipped at the start of the war, was a marvel of sophistication. It could travel at a speed of forty-six knots and was capable of hitting a target at a range of nearly 10,000 yards. It had only one problem; more often than not it didn't work! Commander Edward Beach put it this way: "Time after time, in the early days of the war, our submarine skippers reported that their torpedoes were not running where they were aimed; were not exploding when they got there; were going off impotently before they arrived; or were running in circles with consequent danger to the firing ship..." This danger of a submarine sinking itself had, in fact, occurred on at least two occasions; resulting in the loss of the submarines *Tang* and *Tullibee*. In the face of blind opposition from the bureaucracy in Washington, D.C., it was September of 1943 before Admiral Lockwood, acting on his own initiative, undertook to find and correct the causes for these failures. (Ed. note: Admiral Charles Lockwood replaced Admiral English in command of U.S. submarine forces in January 1943, after the latter was killed in an airplane crash enroute to an inspection of the submarine support facilities at Mare Island.)

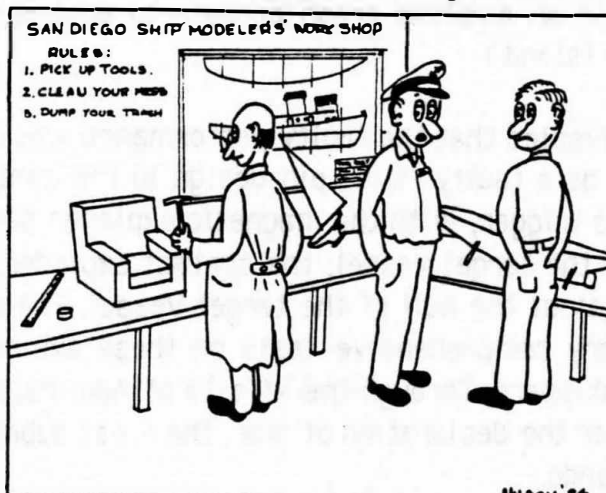
A series of tests at Pearl Harbor revealed that the faulty performance was caused by the Mark 6 magnetic exploder, as well as a faulty firing pin design in the contact exploder. These exploders were the torpedoes trigger, with the magnetic exploder designed to fire as it entered the magnetic field of the target vessel; the contact exploder, as its name implies, fired when it impacted against the hull of the target vessel. The Navy's Bureau of Ordnance had never conducted any comprehensive tests on these exploders, and had ignored the complaints of combat skippers. Through the efforts of Admiral Lockwood and his staff, and nearly two years after the declaration of war, the fleet submarines of the U.S. Navy finally had a reliable torpedo.

The primary victims of the U.S. submarine force were the tankers, transports and miscellaneous cargo ships employed in the Japanese war effort. With improvements in submarine construction and equipment, the wave of destruction wrought by U.S. submarines reached a crescendo in late 1944. By that time, targets were becoming increasingly scarce and many subs were driven to surface attacks on wooden sampans which had been considered not worth the trouble earlier in the war. In one of the post-war accounts of submarine warfare by a U.S. commander, Commander Edward Beach described such an attack on a small fishing boat by saying, "Sometimes these inoffensive looking boats carried concealed radio transmitters and warned of the presence of submarines; this was our excuse ... I've since been somewhat ashamed of the episode, for obviously these fishermen were interested only in the fish." The dearth of shipping represented by actions such as this, was a reality from which the Japanese could not hide. Their ability to effectively conduct war operations and, in fact, sustain their civilian population, had been destroyed. In December of 1941, Japanese merchant shipping was estimated as approximately 6,000,000 tons of ocean-going steel ships. Of this total, fully half was required in order to maintain civilian living in the home islands. By the wars end, in August 1945, Japan's shipping capacity had been reduced to 312,000 tons of available ships hauling cargo.

Before the first atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan was a defeated nation; her industries were dead, her people were starving, and her military might had vanished. The failure of her leaders to recognize the vulnerability of an island nation dependent on imports, had brought an empire to it's end. From late 1943 on, it became clear the shipping losses were outstripping the nations ability to replace them. The loss of cargoes and crews, as well as the ships themselves, had a ripple effect on the entire economy. With more than 5,000,000 tons, or fifty-five percent of the total tonnage sunk to it's credit; it can rightfully be said that the fleet submarines of the U.S. Navy were the single most decisive factor in the defeat of Japan in World War Two.

**SHOW & TELL**

by Nilson



"HE'S AN ARMCHAIR MODELER"

**SHOW & TELL**

by Nilson



"HE'S ANOTHER ARMCHAIR BOAT MODELER."

### **Believe it or not**

Since this issue of the newsletter already has a distinct "submarine" flavor, by virtue of the conclusion of John Turners article; and since I'm rather fond of submarines myself, having served on them briefly, I thought it might be appropriate to present the following submarine trivia taken from the No. 1, 1978 issue of Warship International, where this material appeared in the Naval Lore Corner in an article entitled "The Perils of Submarining". Ed.

- On 24 July, 1943, the U-459 shot down an R.A.F. 'Wellington' bomber in the Bay of Biscay. The aircrafts wreckage fell straight down on top of the U-boat, and when it was heaved over the side, an unexploded depth charge blew up, causing fatal damage to the submarine.
- Early in 1916, off the North Cape, the U-28 torpedoed the British merchant ship *OliveBranch*, bound for northern Russia with munitions. The U-boat surfaced to finish off the merchant ship, and with her second torpedo caused such a violent explosion, that a truck which was part of the ships deck cargo was blown end over end, crashing down on the submarine, and sinking her.
- 'Million to one odds' --- an amazing 'traffic' accident took place on 23 February, 1945 involving two U.S. submarines, *Hoe* and *Flounder*. Both submarines were submerged and patrolling adjacent areas off Indo China, when *U.S.S. Hoe* ground over the hull of *U.S.S. Flounder* causing a 25-foot gash. Fortunately, there were no casualties in either boat.
- In May 1945, the U-439 and U-659 (each unaware of the others presence) were stalking what they believed to be two British coastal convoys - in reality two flotillas of coastal and landing craft. U-439 surfaced to attack and rammed U-659. Both U-boats sustained mortal damage. The British flotillas proceeded unscathed, but an escorting trawler encountered the wreckage, and subsequently rescued 13 humiliated Germans.
- On the night of feb. 1, 1918, the Grand Fleet sortied for exercises in the North Sea accompanied by two flotillas of 'K' Class, steam powered submarines. A series of unfortunate navigational and communications blunders off the Isle of May in the Forth Estuary, resulted in:
  - 1) A collision between K-22 and K-14
  - 2) A second collision in which the battlecruiser *Inflexible* struck and damaged K-22
  - 3) A third collision in which the cruiser *Fearless* sank K-17
  - 4) A final collision in which K-6 rammed and sank K-4.

There were also several near-misses. This diastorous incident became known as the 'Battle of May Island'



**San Diego Ship Modelers Guild  
Officers for 1988**

**Master**  
**Mate**  
**Purser**  
**Logkeeper**  
**Newsletter Editor**  
**Steering Committee**

**Mike Rivera** /redacted/  
**Roger Smith**  
**Bob Hanley** /redacted/  
**Tim Pettit** /redacted/  
**Doug Smay** /redacted/  
**Norm Hiatt** /redacted/  
**Doug McFarland** /redacted/  
**Roy Nilson** 4/redac  
**Fred Fraas** /redacted/

**Schedule of Activities**

**Meetings - Third Friday of the month**  
7:30 PM social, 8:00 PM  
meeting  
**Static Workshops - Every other Tues.**  
7:00 to 9:00 PM aboard  
the ferry Berkeley  
**R/C Operations - Saturday mornings**  
Model Yacht Pond  
**Annual Regatta - Third weekend in**  
June

**Membership**

**Dues are \$10 annually**

**We strongly encourage all to join  
the San Diego Maritime Museum as  
an expression of appreciation for  
the facilities they provide us.**

**DO  
THIS OR  
DIE!**



Please fill out and return the information requested on the form below with your 1989 dues. Dues may be remitted in person at the Nov. or Dec. meeting or mailed to the address on the form. Those not renewing their membership by Jan. 1, 1989 will be dropped from the newsletter mailing list.

### **Membership Application/Renewal**

Please PRINT all  
Information

Return to: Bob Hanley, Purser  
San Diego Ship Modelers  
Guild /redacted/

**Annual Dues \$10.00**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Business Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
(If it is OK for Guild members to call you at  
work about models or Guild matters)

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Optional)

Modelling specialty: \_\_\_\_\_  
(i.e. 19th century sailing ships, Steam power, tugs, ships in bottles Submarines, etc.)

Special talents: \_\_\_\_\_  
(i.e. special talents you have that you might be able to share with other members, such  
as; fibreglassing, machining, resin or metal casting, silver soldering, electronics and  
radio control, photo etching, etc., or any areas in which you have special knowledge. )

Projects completed: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Projects in work: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_