



Forecastle Report

Newsletter of the Midwest Model Shipwrights

April 2009

● Scuttlebutt ●

Commodore **Sid Wotman** rang the meeting to order promptly at 7:30 with 28 hands present and welcomed a guest, **Tom Wilcox**, aboard.

For those of you that are subscribers, we were told that "Model Shipwright" magazine would be going to a single 200+ page annual publication.

Purser **Ken Goetz** reminded everyone that he is now collecting dues for 2009 and that you **must** be paid up as of the March meeting to continue receiving the Forecastle Report. So square yourself away and send Ken your dues. Thanks mates. **(\$20 check made payable to: "Midwest Model Shipwrights" • mail to: Ken Goetz, 3302 Sarah St., Franklin Park, IL 60131).**

Kurt Van Dahm is thinking of hosting an airbrush workshop at his shop on some Saturday. If you'd be interested, please let Kurt know. Kurt also gave us a first look at "Badger's" new spray paint brush line (*Velocity, Spirit, Rage*) and they are beauties. Give Kurt a call at [630-968-3189](tel:630-968-3189) for details or visit the "Badger" web site for more information.

Kurt also gives us a heads up on a "Fiskar" brand tool called a Fingertip Control Craft Knife that he learned about from Ed Urbanczyk during a recent planking workshop. Tool slips over your finger with your fingertip on top of the knurled area to give precise control.



An FYI to all from **Kurt Van Dahm** concerning colors for the *Vasa*: there is a link to the English language side of the *Vasa* Museum's web site showing the painting of the 1:10 scale model they built. The colors are very vivid and are said to be an exact match to the original paint. Go to: http://www.vasamuseet.se/sitecore/content/Vasamuseet/InEnglish/Exhibitions/vasa_model.aspx#.

Jerry Reed's tip of the month is to use a dental glass mixing slab placed in a shallow container over crushed ice to help maintain small amounts of CA glue in a workable condition for extended periods of time. Prevents the CA from setting up quickly. Thanks, Jerry.

Bill Short has just completed a re-write of his book "Carving Ornamentation for Ship Models". Go to: <http://carving-book.wikispaces.com/English+Carving+Book+Ordering+Details>

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April Meeting Notice

"Stropping Deadeyes"

By Bob Filipowski



Bob strops the neatest deadeye you ever saw. Come learn his unique techniques and make your models shine with that air of authenticity they deserve. See you there.

The concluding segment of Bob Filipowski's article on "The Battle Off Samar" appears on page 4.

Fourth in our new series, **Historic American Warships**, features the *USS Monitor*, the first commissioned ironclad warship in the US Navy. Read about her on page 5.

Our next meeting will be at 7:15 p.m. Wednesday, April 15, 2009
At the Community Presbyterian Church
407 Main Street in Mount Prospect

● Models of Japan ●

By Gus Agustin

We were treated to a non-stop parade of gorgeous ship model photos taken at the "Rope Conference - 2008" held in Japan. Just about everything was covered from conventional kits to unique scratch built models of ships found only in the far east. Of particular interest were the views of very fine carving details which clearly demonstrated the



high level of modeling techniques being done in Japan. Feast your eyes on these images and set your sights on what can be achieved.

See Models, Page 3

● Ships on Deck ●

Helmut Reiter was very happy with the startup of the rigging work on his *La Belle* model (1:36), as well he should be. Rope used was "Morope" and, in using CA glue to fix the knots,



he found a CA solvent from "Woodcraft" very useful in correcting any small errors that

cropped up. Thanks for the tip, mate.

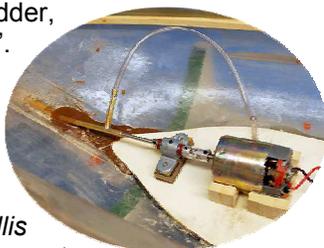
Kurt Van Dahm has started work on the 1884 stern wheel packet boat *Chaperon* (1:48). This is a new "Model Shipways" kit that Kurt is trying on for size and he says he is very happy with the materials and layout so far. She has a 24" hull and an amazing 29 bulkheads! Very rigid.



Doc Williams has, as far as Kurt Van Dahm is concerned, finally seen the light, as he has begun work on a "semi-kit" of the *Hartman Tug*. Doc says "the power train



is essentially installed with rudder, crankshaft, bearing and motor". In addition, installation of the deck supports was also begun on the inside of the fiberglass hull using fiberglass resin for attachment. Doc plans to christen her the *Phyllis L.* Nice touch, mate, and a great looking start to a fine model.



Walt Philips is working on a "Hybrid" version of the "Model Shipways" kit of the *Emma C. Berry* lobster smack



(1:32). Hybrid means he is building her from scratch but using the plans supplied by "Model Shipways". Additional detail was added inside the cabin to really make this model unique. Great choice of materials, mate.



John Pocius has begun work on an *Aleut Sea Otter Hunter Diorama* to depict one phase of the history of the Aleuts, an indigenous people of the Aleutian Islands.

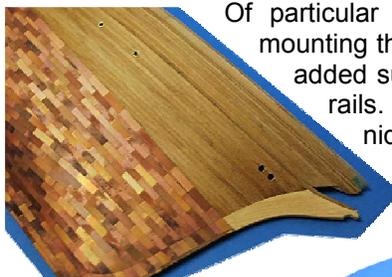


Included is a study bust of an Aleut to aid in creating the figures in the diorama. All works of art, mate.



Bob Filipowski has pronounced his half-hull model of the *Clipper Staghound* (1:96) all finished save for painting.

Of particular note was the detail on mounting the forecastle deck with an added support as well as the cap rails. Airbrush painting technique will be used after masking all the chain plates. Brush painting is reserved for some of



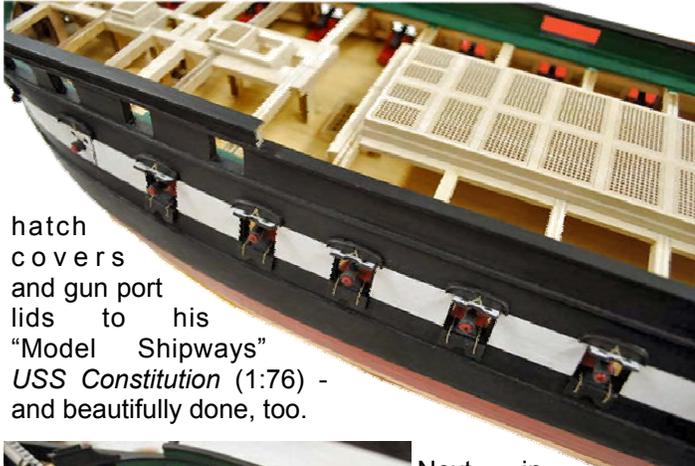
the tight areas where spray may not reach. Copper plates were sealed with "Dullcoat". Best of luck at Manitowoc, mate. It's good for a medal in our eyes.



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Ships-on-Deck, continued from page 2

Ken Goetz, despite claiming to have been “sidetracked” this past month, still managed to add coamings, gratings,



hatch covers and gun port lids to his “Model Shipways” *USS Constitution* (1:76) - and beautifully done, too.



Next in line will be the deck planking and Ken plans to experiment with several woods to find the best in appearance. Birch, maple or bass wood are being considered.

Jim Merritt showed us the progress he has made on his 1:54 scale “Mamoli” kit of the *Yacht Mary*. All the planking is now done complete with treenails.

Planking tools were also displayed, including a plank bender, belt sander (for cutting planks in lieu of a knife) and the clamps he uses to hold multiple planks together while shaping (Jim cuts port and starboard planks simultaneously). To hold planks when gluing, Jim uses mini-nails, which he later removes and replaces with treenails. Thanks for the great ideas, mate.



Bob Sykes says he made good use of his “Model Expo Block Sander” in setting up the rigging on his model of the *USS Constellation* (1:85). Sails were modified by soaking in tea to give them the weathered look. Great looking results, mate.



Models, continued from page 1



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THE BATTLE OFF SAMAR

Continued from March 2009 Issue

It may have been divine providence, but as Taffy III turned south to avoid the onrushing Japanese, this actually brought the CVE's into the wind. It was a bizarre scene as ships belched smoke, multi-colored shell splashes enveloped the carriers, and deck crews frantically tried to arm aircraft with whatever was handy. Many planes attacked the enemy with depth charges, rockets, and finally nothing as they made "dry" runs over the enemy, hoping to distract them.



USS *White Plains* is bracketed by enemy fire (background) as the *Kitkun Bay* frantically scrambles aircraft.

The 3 *Fletcher* class DD's along with the DE *Samuel B. Roberts* were the first to attack with torpedoes. The *Hoel*, *Johnston* and *Roberts* would eventually be sunk, but not before exacting some measure on at least three heavy cruisers. The *Heermann*, in spite of sustaining substantial damage, would actually engage the mighty *Yamato*, forcing her to turn away from this tin can's spread of 10 "fish."



As things became more critical, the *Dennis* along with the other two remaining DE's were ordered to engage. Although these vessels carried three torpedo tubes, they were never intended to attack capital ships. Due to the smoke and confusion, a coordinated attack could not be mounted. As the *Dennis* turned towards a column of four heavy cruisers, she realized that she was alone. Nonetheless, the *Dennis* closed to less than 8000 yards, and fired. Sam stated with justifiable pride that his ship nailed one cruiser before returning to screen the



carriers. Palermo didn't find out until years later at a reunion, but the gunnery officer in charge of torpedoes was Lt. John M. Smyth. If that name sounds familiar, it should. He would eventually start the large Chicago furniture store chain.

As mentioned earlier, Sam had no way of knowing what was happening, but he felt the violent maneuvers of the *Dennis*, the impact of shells, the rattle of shrapnel on the hull from near misses, and the recoil of the ship's guns as she charged. When the ship started firing her two 5" 38 cal. guns, Palermo knew they were well within



range of the Japanese heavies, but as the 40mm's opened up, and then the 20's, he really became concerned!

In spite of the gritty courage being shown by the U.S. tin cans and Navy fliers, the Japanese continued to press home their attack, and eventually began to find the range. The USS *Gambier Bay* was hit repeatedly, and staggered out of formation. The Japanese cruisers and destroyers sensing a kill, closed in on the baby flattop, and for over an hour pounded her mercilessly. She would be the only US carrier sunk by enemy naval gunfire in World War II.



The *Gambier Bay* (right) making smoke along with other Taffy III vessels early in the battle.

There are many theories as to why Admiral Kurita decided to abort the attack, but nobody knows for sure. As the remnants of his fleet began withdrawing, it's been recorded that one resolute gob aboard a jeep carrier exclaimed: "Damn it! They're getting away!" However, Taffy III's ordeal was not over, and the *Dennis* would perform yet another heroic task.

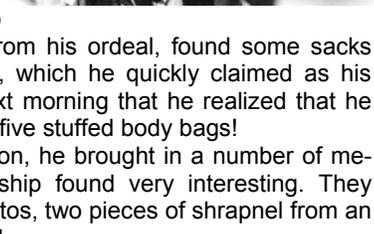
This battered task group would have the distinction of suffering the first Kamikaze attack of the war. A Zero loaded with a 500-pound bomb penetrated the hail of AA fire and slammed into the *St. Lo*, setting off internal explosions from munitions and aviation fuel. One determined pilot, willing to die, had done more damage than the 18" guns of the mighty *Yamato*.

The *Dennis* immediately began picking up survivors. She would account for 434 men out of the 932 rescued! One of Sam's anecdotes relates to a sailor from aboard this carrier, which he met many years later at a Taffy III reunion.

With almost 700 men crammed aboard this small DE, finding a place to sleep that night was very difficult. This particular seaman, who was completely exhausted from his ordeal, found some sacks on top of the torpedo tubes, which he quickly claimed as his "bunk." It wasn't until the next morning that he realized that he had spent the night on top of five stuffed body bags!

As part of Sam's presentation, he brought in a number of mementos, which the membership found very interesting. They included some awesome photos, two pieces of shrapnel from an 8" shell, and a Navy survival fishing kit, complete with heavy line and lure!

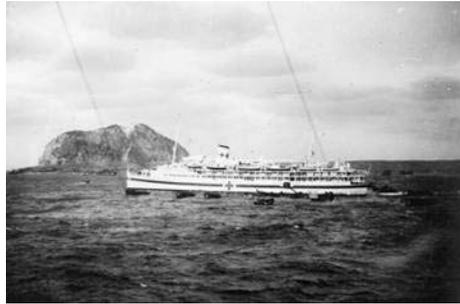
Sam, we want to thank you for a great presentation. Your story helps keep alive the sacrifices made by all Americans during World War II. You make us all very proud!



THE PHOTO GALLERY

Sam Palermo, as part of his presentation, brought two photo albums just loaded with great snapshots, which portrayed life aboard a Destroyer Escort during World War II. For those of you who didn't get a chance to look at these gems, here is just a sample.

The USS *Dennis* in circa 1944 Pacific Theater camouflage.



USS *Solace* off Iwo Jima. She would be filled to capacity within 24 hours of arriving on station.



The forward 40mm gun mount and crew.



Spoils of war. A Japanese gun emplacement.



Loading torpedoes aboard a *Fletcher* class destroyer.



Heading for some R&R on Eniwetok.



King Neptune's Court crossing the Equator.



Hey guys! Are you sure this is my lookout station?



Hey! This stuff aint half bad!



Nothing but beer, beaches, and baseball!



Refueling at sea from a *Cimarron* class tanker.



USS *Sangamon* The large object sticking up from the flight deck is the stern elevator after a Kamikaze hit. Somehow, she survived!



Dennis approaches an *Independence* class CVL. These carriers were originally going to be light cruisers, but were changed before completion.

Planking Workshop III

Ray Oswalt and Bob Filipowski took their “Dog & Pony Show” on the road as Kurt Van Dahm and the Chicago Nautical Research and Model Ship Society hosted the third edition of their planking workshop. If you have never visited Kurt’s studio, you’re missing out on something special. The spacious room is filled with various models he has featured in Ships in Scale as well as an interesting collection of towboat, fireboat and nautical memorabilia.

Those in attendance included NRMS members John Brackett, Bill Cera, Jerry Heninger, Toni Levine, Ed Urbanczyk, David Watt and Kurt VanDahm. The discussion opened with tips on hull preparation, and the importance of being sure



your hull is symmetrical and all bulkheads or frames are beveled properly. John Brackett brought in a framed up *Swift* kit, which exhibited the problems that can be encountered when a manufacturer markets an inferior product. Bob Filipowski took the opportunity to point out potential trouble spots, and how they could be remedied.

Planking theory was next with emphasis being placed on how a ship’s hull shape can affect the proportions of a strake as you proceed either forward or aft. After discussing the various types of stealer and drop plank configurations, it was on to a little hands-on practice. Using the training aids, Ray had everyone try their hand at laying out a garboard and first broad strake. Day two started out with a review on determining plank proportions, followed by hands-on drop plank and half-check stealer applications.



Over the last three months feedback from all three workshops has been very positive. As new members join the Tri-Club Association, Ray and Bob will probably hold another class on this method of planking, but for now, Planking Workshop III concluded this series of presentations for 2009. Future workshops will include airbrushing hosted by Kurt Van Dahm as well as possibly ship’s boats by Ray Oswalt. Stay tuned, mates! ❖

● *USS Monitor* ●

Fourth in our series on *Historic American Warships* is the *USS Monitor*, which was the first ironclad warship commissioned by the United States Navy. She is most famous for her participation in the first-ever naval battle between two ironclad warships, the Battle of Hampton Roads on March 9, 1862 during the American Civil War, in which *Monitor* fought the ironclad *CSS Virginia (Merrimack)* of the Confederate States Navy.



Ironclads were only a recent innovation, started with the 1859 French battleship *La Gloire*. Afterwards, the design of ships and the nature of naval warfare changed dramatically.

Ordered: October 4, 1861
Builder: Continental Iron Works & DeLamater Iron Works, & others
Laid down: 1861
Launched: January 30, 1862
Commissioned: February 25, 1862
Fate: Lost at sea, 12/31/1862

Length: 172 feet
Beam: 41 ft., 6 in.
Draft: 10 ft., 6 in.
Displacement: 987 long tons
Speed: 8 knots
Crew: 59 officers and men
Armament: 2 x 11 in. (280 mm) Dahlgren smoothbores
Armor: Iron

Designed by the Swedish engineer John Ericsson, *Monitor* was described as a “cheesebox on a raft”, consisting of a heavy round revolving iron gun turret on the deck, housing two 11-inch Dahlgren guns, paired side by side. The armored deck was barely above the waterline. Aside from a small boxy pilothouse, a detachable smokestack and a

few fittings, the bulk of the ship was below the waterline to prevent damage from cannon fire. In addition to its rotating turret, *Monitor* was also fitted with Ericsson’s novel marine screw, whose efficiency and reliability allowed the warship to be one of the first to rely exclusively upon steam propulsion.

While the design of *Monitor* was well suited for river combat, her low freeboard and heavy turret made her highly un-seaworthy in rough waters. Swamped by high waves while under tow, she sank on December

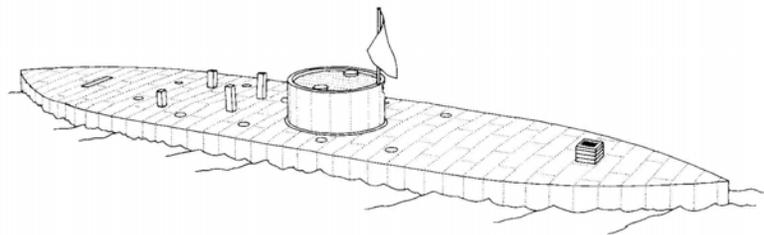


31, 1862 in the Atlantic Ocean off Cape Hatteras, NC. In 1973, the wreck of the *Monitor* was located and, in 1986, designated a National Historic Landmark. Since then, many artifacts have been recovered and conserved.

This article was compiled from information provided on the web site: www.wikipedia.org.



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