

## Skipper's Corner

### **Items From The Ditty Bag**

by Joe Miller  
*WSMS Skipper*

Since Joel Labow was kind enough to submit an excellent article for this month's *Lynx*, I will take this opportunity to talk about a couple of items beyond the usual report about the last meeting.

To start, we have (finally) made progress with the 75th Anniversary celebration, after a mere 7 months of trying. Hugh Repogle contacted the arm Navy Club and received a favorable answer regarding holding the celebration there. As we

discussed at the last WSMS meeting, the Army-Navy club has expressed interest in having a ship model display there as well in conjunction with the proposed banquet. There are a number of details to be ironed out, not least of which is the date and time - we are estimating the February-March timeframe, probably on a weekend afternoon.. We need to know how many are actually going to attend, and equally importantly, who will be willing to bring what models. We intend to discuss this at the meeting next Saturday, (11 December) at Meteor Productions. We will get back to everyone about this

Also, a member was not able to gain entrance to the grounds of NNMC at the last meeting. We apologize for this, although it appears to have been an isolated event. We actually do try to make security aware of the event, but under the circumstances miscommunications can and do occur. The gate guards try their very best to be accommodating, but security is a very real issue for us. It is for this reason that we obtained the dashboard passes. If you do not have one, please speak to me and I will do my best to get you one. A number of members have not picked up theirs, and I will bring them to the next meeting. Finally, something I have mentioned briefly in the past, my favorite magazine, the Nautical Research Journal. If you are not An NRG member/subscriber, you are really missing something. Unlike most modeling magazines, this professional journal goes into depth about nautical details, and certainly does not simply rehash the latest attempt to rescue a kit. For example, in the Winter 2004 issue, the West Coast Steam

**Next Meeting**  
**Saturday, December 11, 2002**  
**At 10 A.M.**  
**At**  
**Meteor Productions,**  
**Suites H & I**  
**7401 Fullerton Road**  
**Springfield Virginia**

#### **Directions to Meteor Productions**

- 1: From the Capitol Beltway, merge onto I-95 S via exit number 57A toward RICHMOND.
- 2: Merge onto BACKLICK RD/ VA-617 S via exit number 167 toward FULLERTON RD.
- 3: BACKLICK RD/ VA-617 S becomes ALBAN RD/ VA-790 S.
- 4: Turn RIGHT onto BOUDINOT DR.
- 5: Turn LEFT onto FULLERTON RD

Schooner is discussed, a ship type of which (among many others) I was quite unaware, as well as super-detailed information about the WWII era Oerlikon 20 mm cannon, and the stem yacht *Turbinia* - a revolutionary small ship, which, after "crashing" a Naval Review, helped to convince the British Admiralty of the Marine turbine engine's value. Finally, last but certainly not least, if there is a kit-bashing article, it too is of real quality - in this instance, part one of our Commodore plus 1, Harry Ohanian's IJN *Yamato* 1/200 scale super model.

Enough for now. See you next Saturday!!

### **Newsflash! WSMS to Return to St. Michaels!**

Joe Miller has received an email from the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels, MD asking for our participation in our Second Annual Model Exposition scheduled for the weekend of May 21, 22, 2005. You will note that we are not asking participants to pay an entry fee—they are offering the use of the Van Lennep Auditorium for the two days of the event. Bob Mason has indicated that they think that our participation would add another attractive dimension to the event. They aim to duplicate and hopefully exceed the conditions and response you enjoyed at the Maritime Arts Festivals in the past.

Many of us have exhibited our models at the museum in the past. The exhibitions presented as part of the Mid-Atlantic Maritime Arts Festivals drew good crowds – over 150 people visited the last one! The format of this year's event will be different, and will be focused specifically on ship models, which should make for an interesting weekend.

The bridge will be working with Bob and the staff at the museum to firm up the details. Stay tuned for more information. But mark your calendars – this should be a fun weekend!

### **Labow's Notes on Modeling *Constitution* Fighting Top**

At the last meeting, Joel Labow spoke about his work on constructing the armament for his model of the *Constitution's* fighting tops. Joel provides the following comments for the newsletter

“As I did my research for the *Constitution* main-top masters, I have found the two-volume series "Boarders Away" by William Gilkerson (Andrew Mowbray, Inc. - Vol. 1 1991 & Vol. 2, 1993) to be a treasure trove of information. Volume 1 is subtitled 'With Steel' and volume 2 is subtitled 'Firearms of the Age of Fighting Sail.' The use and appearance of the great guns is very familiar to most modelers but the weapons and other materials used in the fighting tops was much less so (at least to me!).

“The first weapon that I prepared a master for was a 3-pounder Swivel howitzer which follows a pattern attributed to Paul Revere. The brass barrel was 17 1/4" long and the bore was 3". Revere cast three of these for the USN and the one preserved in the *Constitution* museum is the most likely candidate to be one of them. The barrel was turned on my old Unimat SL1000 and the tiller and mount were silver soldered from brass stock.

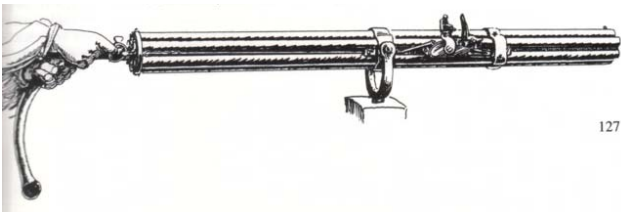


**Joel's Finished 3-Pound Swivel Howitzer**



**Finished 3-Pound Swivel Howitzer**

“The second weapon was even more unique and may possibly have been the first true 'machine gun.' This was the Chambers patent 7 barrel repeating swivel. The weapon consisted of seven four-foot long 0.75" bore barrels each of which was loaded with 25 rounds! The bullets were specially cast with a fuse hole through the center so each round would set off the round behind it, much like a Roman candle firework. When fired the swivel would fire all 175 rounds over about 2 minutes! The major drawback was the fact that it was an all day project to load the thing: a special calibrated ramrod was used so that the 25th round in each barrel would line up with the flintlock, which was about 2/3 of the way to the muzzles.

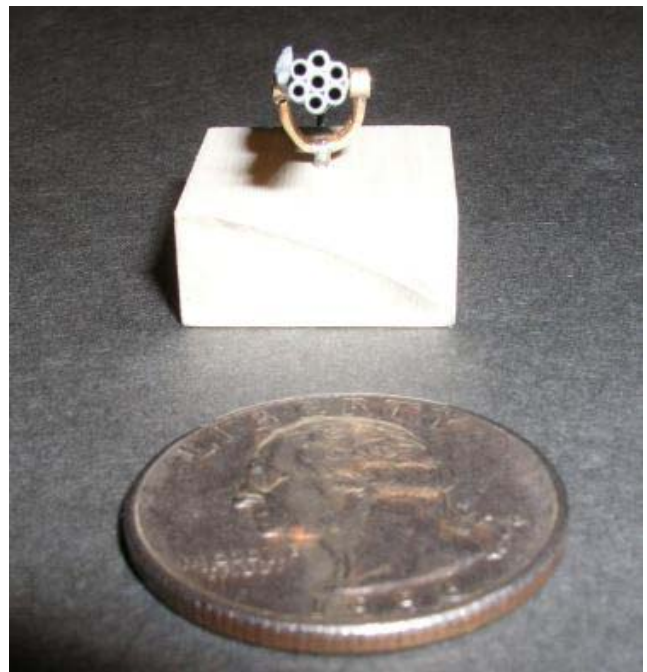


**7-Barrel Repeating Swivel Gun**

“The Constitution was known to have carried several of these during her 1814-1815 cruise and may have used them in her engagement with HMS Cyane and Levant. The model was made with brass tubing sweat-soldered together: the flintlock was purloined from a figurine.

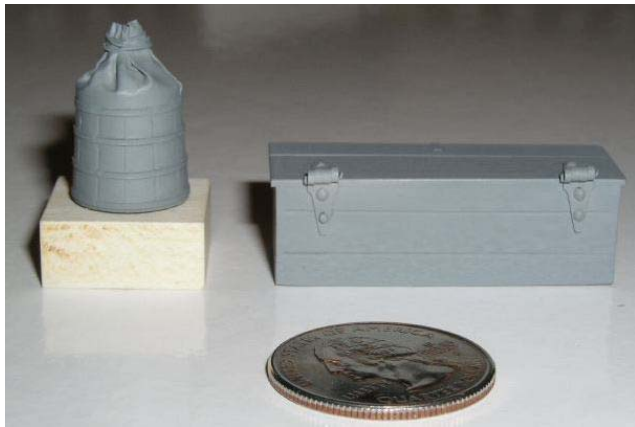


**7-Barrel Repeating Swivel Model**



**A Nasty Looking Weapon!**

An arms chest and a "Budge barrel" were also fabricated. The term 'budge' was a corruption of the old French word "bouge" meaning leather bag: the barrel took the form of the frustrum of a cone with a leather cover. The principal use was stowage and transport of grenades. Both the arms chest and budge barrel were positioned behind the masthead on the unengaged side for obvious reasons. The barrel was turned on my Unimat; the leather was simulated by thin sheet lead from my extensive collection of wine bottle seals (no I didn't drink all the wine! I shamelessly collected it after social functions).



**Budge Barrl with Arms Locker**

*The budge or grenade barrel is made in a frustrum of a cone; the smaller end is open, and fitted with leather, or painted canvass, which is drawn close as a purse. They serve to carry the*

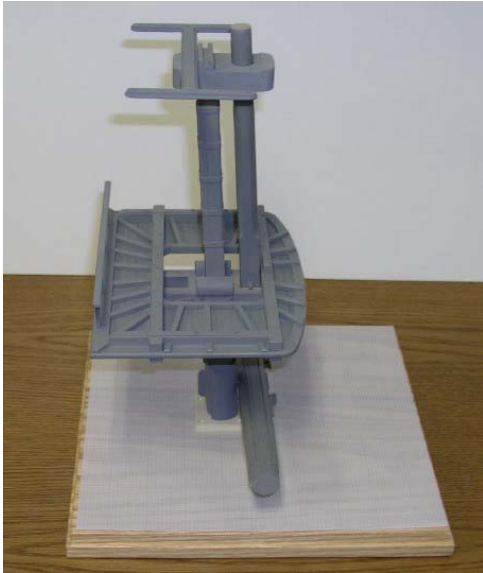


**Budge Barrel Master**

“Finally, I attach several shots of the masters as that went to Meteor. I didn't have them at the November meeting so you can include them or not as you see fit. All illustrations and photos of the prototypes were taken from Gilkerson 'Boarders Away' Vol. 2.”



**Constitution Fighting Top Showing Cross Trees**



**Complete Fighting Top Master**



**Disassembled Top Showing Parts**



**Fighting Top Portside.**



**Stern View**

## **Steel Navy Special Interest Group**

The Steel Navy special interest group meets the last Saturday of the month in one of the members' homes. This group focuses on post-civil war powered vessels. Plastic, wood, cardboard, metal and computer models are all discussed. Members are encouraged to bring their latest kits, models, tools or reference materials.

There will be no meeting in December because of the holiday schedule. The next meeting will be held on January 29. Watch this space in the next newsletter for details, or contact Vince McCullough (703) 345-8644 (daytime) or by email at [vincent.mccullough@ngc.com](mailto:vincent.mccullough@ngc.com).

### **WSMS Officers**

The following individuals currently serve on the WSMS "Bridge"

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### **WSMS Loses Another Member**

The WSMS has lost another member. Robert Bisselle passed way on Monday, November 1, 2004. He was an avid modeler, and a regular attendee at club meetings. He is survived by his wife, Frances B. Bisselle, daughters Mary Beth Bisselle of Bethesda and Kathryn Bisselle of Rockville, MD and sons of Thad Bisselle of Gaithersburg, MD and Robert B. Bisselle of Boyds, MD, as well as seven grandchildren. A veteran, Bob will be interred at Arlington National Cemetery Columbarium on December 22, at 3 p.m. Contributions may be made in his name to the American Cancer Society, 11331 Amherst Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20902.

Fair winds and following seas, Bob! You will be missed.

### **Upcoming WSMS Meeting Schedule**

Regular monthly meetings alternate between Virginia and Maryland locations. Virginia meetings are held on the second Saturday of the month, and Maryland meetings on the second Tuesday. The current meeting plan is:

December 11 (Saturday), 10 AM – Regular Meeting, Meteor Productions, Springfield, VA.

January 10 (Tuesday) 8 PM – Regular Meeting, Bethesda Naval Hospital

January 29 (Saturday), 10 AM – Steel Navy Meeting, location to be announced.

*Happy Holidays from the WSMS Bridge!*