



San Diego Ship Modelers' Guild

1492 N. Harbor Drive

San Diego, CA 92101

January 2008

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME XXXII No.1

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**Newsletter
Distribution**
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Established in 1972
by
Bob Wright and
Russ Merrill



Guild meeting Report December 12, 2007

A atmosphere prevailed aboard HMS Surprise on a very chilly December evening. Many goodies were available as well as Pizza and sodas. May all of our members and friends have a Happy New Year.

For the January meeting we will have a swap meet and an auction. If you have any large ticket items that you would like auctioned off, attach your name and a starting bid price to each item. We will have an area where these items can be staged. For smaller items, books, tools, magazines, wood and any other ship related material be sure to mark them with a price. We will have a brief business meeting, then a swap meet, followed by the auction. You may donate the proceeds to the Guild or you can keep the money if you wish.

The auction items so far are two fine kits donated by **Ron Zeunges**;

1897 Gloucester fishing schooner *Were Here*

1877 Gloucester fishing schooner *Smuggler*

Mr. Brian Collard (not a member) wants someone to build a sixty four inch long r/c model of the CASTOR. He has the plans and is interested in pricing at this time. He is also searching for plans of a cargo vessel SD 14. You may reach him at 785-342-5991.

Mr. Sy Scheinberg (SMA member) is looking for some advice and guidance in building the Endeavor. He did not mention which kit it is. You may e-mail him at sscheinberg@exchange.fullerton.edu

NOTICE:

After years of planning, design, and anticipation, the Naval Academy Museum in Preble Hall is about to begin a major renovation. The Museum will close in two stages: on Monday, 26 November, the Ship Model Gallery will close, and on Monday, 10 December, the entire Museum will close to visitors.

We anticipate reopening in about eighteen months, at which time we will have modern, museum-quality heating, air conditioning, and lighting, and all new exhibitions that will better serve the Brigade and our public.
Dr. J. Scott Harmon, Director USNA Museum

San Diego Ship
Modelers' Guild
is affiliated with
and supports the
Maritime
Museum of San
Diego



THRU THE LUBBERS HOLE



USS CAIRO

By Robert Hewitt

From "Warships and Naval Battles of the Civil War" by
Tony Gibbon

During the Civil War, the upper Mississippi and Ohio rivers were well-served with shipyards and machine shops able to turn out the type of vessels needed for service in the western rivers. John Lenthall made a detailed study of armed screw steam vessels for the Mississippi and doubted that such vessels would be efficient, as western rivers were too shallow to take them. Any warship would need to be side wheel with a flat bottom. Lenthall's design was for a ship nearly nine feet deep and one-hundred seventy feet long and a mere twenty-eight feet wide.

Samuel Pook was called in to consult with Lenthall over the proposals, and extensively revised them to produce a one hundred and seventy-five by fifty foot boat drawing only six feet. There were three keels and a flat bottom, and mounted on the hull was an armored casemate running almost the entire length of the hull. Its sides sloped forty-five degrees at the bow and stern and thirty-five degrees at the sides. The structure was to be pierced for three guns at the bow and aft, with seven on each side. The engines were to be protected by iron plates.

Winfield Scott, the general-in-chief of the army, wanted a naval blockade of Southern ports to keep out supplies from foreign countries. He also would send a column down the Mississippi to split the Confederacy in two. The thrust down the Mississippi would complete the total blockade of the south.

The plan to regain control of the Mississippi called for between twelve and twenty gunboats. James Eads, a St Louis engineer, suggested the establishment of a protected base at Cairo, Illinois to build the ships. The army called for bids which were opened on August 5, 1861. The low bid was from Eads for \$89,000 for four to sixteen craft. Two days later he signed a contract to build seven gunboats. The ships were *Cairo*, *Carondelet*, *Cincinnati*, *Louisville*, *Mound City*, *Pittsburg* and *St Louis*. Three hulls were built in Mound City; the other four were built in Carondelet, Missouri. Engines and boilers were supplied from Pittsburg and St Louis. The engines were designed by Thomas Merritt. Armor plate was supplied by Gaylord & Sons Co, who had mills in Portsmouth, Ohio and Newport, Kentucky. The armor was rolled in lengths of eight to thirteen feet and thirteen inches wide. The total weight of armor was seventy tons. Later after the battle of Fort Pillow the vessels were reinforced by putting more railroad iron around the stems and sterns. This added an extra forty-seven tons in weight. Protection was further increased by suspending logs along the sides.

The massive wheelhouse was built into the aft end of the long superstructure, extending sixty feet forward and eighteen feet across. It had a gentle curve from the waterline up to ease the flow of water into the paddlewheel. The officer's quarters were built into the aft section of the casemate, and the crew berthed on the gun deck.



Some seventy-five tons of protective iron plating were added around the boilers, which were squeezed into the lower part of the vessel. Engines were angled at fifteen degrees and had a six-foot stroke. Less than one ton of coal was consumed per hour. All of the vessels were laid down and launched in 1861. They were completed during

January 1862, seven months later than planned, in spite of extra men being added to the workforce.

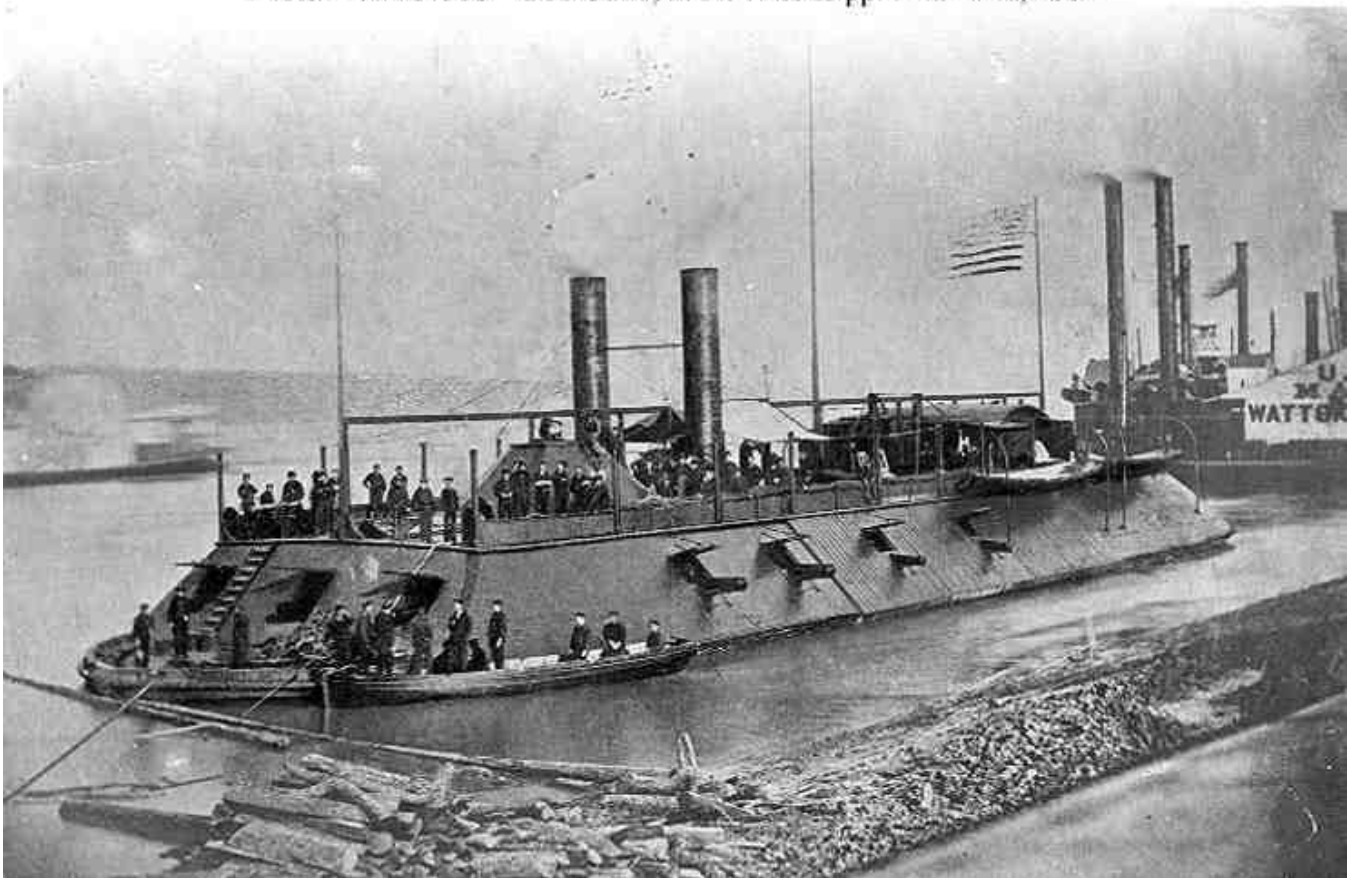
Delays in payment to Eads forced him to use his own funds to settle wages and material costs, and his original quote of \$89,600 was exceeded by about \$101,808, mostly caused by changes. The vessels led active lives and were the backbone of the River Squadron. They took part in every major action, initially serving with the army's Western Gunboat Fleet before transferring to the navy on October 1, 1862. At first under army command, the officers were supplied by the navy.

Cairo served at Fort Pillow and took part in action against Confederate rams in Memphis.

She later served in Vicksburg, but while on the Yazoo expedition, she struck a mine during a clearing operation on December 12, 1862. *St Louis* was also lost by striking a mine in the Yazoo River in July 1863. The remaining vessels continued to serve on the Mississippi until the end of the war. Four were sold in November, 1865 and one in early 1866.

The *Cairo* was discovered in 1965 by Edwin Bearss, Historian at Vicksburg National Park, along with two companions. They used a pocket compass and iron bar probes. the discovery was not proven until three years later when divers brought up armored port covers to positively confirm the find. In 1960 interest grew with the recovery of the pilothouse, an eight inch smoothbore cannon with its oak carriage well preserved by the Yazoo mud. Hopes of raising the ironclad intact were crushed in 1964 when lifting cables cut deeply into her oak beams. *Cairo* was raised in three sections in 1964. The battered remains were put on barges and towed to Vicksburg. In 1965 the hulls were towed to Ingalls Shipyard on the Gulf Coast in Pascagoula, Mississippi. The armor was removed, cleaned and stored. The two engines were taken apart, cleaned and reassembled. In June 1977 the vessel was transported to the Vicksburg National Military Park.

Photo # NH 61568 USS *Cairo*, in the Mississippi River area, 1862





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**Next Meeting will be Wednesday January 9, 2008
aboard the Berkeley at 7:00 pm**



Festival of Sail is August 2008