




# AMS CHRONICLE

IPMS DENVER ROB WOLF CHAPTER  
OCTOBER 2018

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Treasurer	Bob Nixon															
Contest Chairman	Eric Cain															
Newsletter Editor	Wayne Cassell															
<p><b><u>NEXT MEETING:</u></b> 07 NOVEMBER 2018 1900</p>	<p><b>Better Late Than Never</b></p>	<p><b>Any model that would have fit any of the previous 2018 contest themes that you didn't get a chance to finish</b></p>														

## EDITOR RAMBLINGS FROM THE BUNKER

Classes are almost over, election work is almost over, PT on knee is almost over. Hopefully that means some bunker and study clean up and some bench time.

Picked up a new book and wargame on The Russian Civil War or, perhaps more aptly named, Russia's civil wars.

Knocked out a Jack Reacher book and both movies and waiting for No. 1 in the series from the library. I also have started the latest Honor Harrington book .

Nikto ne Zabyt  
Nichto ne Zabyto

## A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hi Everyone, not much to talk about but those that missed the last meeting there were a couple of things you may be interested in. First there will be a swap meet a Colpar's on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, not sure of the start time but most likely at Colpar's opening time. Colpar's will also host their Plastic Model Contest, Saturday November 10<sup>th</sup>. It's open to all plastic modelers and a Juniors contest. Registration starts a 10am running to 11:30am.

After Eric Cain presented the contest themes for next year he also suggested a new challenge. At our Cut Throat Gift Exchange in December those that want to participate will bring in a paper bag with a model inside. There should be no identifying markings that would indicate what is in the bag. There should be no instructions or other indications on how it should be assembled. Then at a time to be determine those that participated will bring in their completed models and judged. A prize(s) will

be awarded, but the categories have not yet been determined. Please give this some thought and we will see if there is enough interest at our meeting in November.

As it's become my unfortunate practice I did not announce the contest theme for next month. Again, my apologies, and I even had it on the agenda. Oh well, here is the Contest Theme for November: Better Late Than Never (any model that would have fit any of the previous 2018 contest themes that you didn't get a chance to finish.)

Thanks again for all your support and let me know if you have any questions.

Bob Pridemore

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Hi Friends - here's an update on the VAFM commemoration for 11/11/18 - flyer attached - to all who I thought might be interested - friends and families.

I spoke with Andy Parks who runs the show, and the hangar will be open from 10-2 on Sunday the 11th with food, presentations, re-enactors and, hopefully, some flying. They are putting the Spad back together after trailering it to/from the recent Dawn Patrol Event in Dayton, and hope to have it ready for the 11th. The Fokker D-VII is getting its annual accomplished before it can fly and they hope to have that complete as well. Guaranteed as always, is a great hangar filled with replica aircraft (a 7/8ths Sopwith Camel, a full-size SE.5 under construction, a 7/8ths SE.5), and lots of parts, engines, memorabilia, etc., and food. PLUS, original and actual uniforms, logbooks, and medals from many of the WW1 Aces that Andy has in his collection - at least 40 of them, all with a story (Ask about the WW1 Ace who was found running the elevator in Rockefeller Center.... or look for the German Battleship Bismark's Chief Engineer's uniform and logbook.... or Woman's Air Corps uniforms.... or the pilot's uniform for the author of "Mutiny on the Bounty".... or..... ). It

should be a great time with lots to see and do, and a very friendly atmosphere - sharing history together.

The directions are on the VAFM Web site (<https://www.vafm.org/hours-map>) and feel free to call the number on the bottom of the flyer for more information or if you have trouble finding the Air Park. It's a great way to honor the 100th anniversary of the end of WW1, and Veterans Day as well - and a weekend to do so together. Hope to see you there!

WHOLE COUNTRY GOES WILD WITH JOY OVER NEWS OF PEACE

# WAR OVER

The Evening World **FIRST** Published the News of The War's End To-Day

The Evening World. **FINAL EDITION**

Ft Lupton, Sunday, November 11 2018.

## END OF THE WAR TO END ALL WARS 100TH ANNIVERSARY OPEN HOUSE NOV 11

*Open House  
Schedule*

- ◆ 10:45 Talk
- ◆ 11:30 Lunch
- ◆ 2:00 Doors Close

*Call 303-668-8044  
with questions*



**Special Talk...**  
on the 100th anniversary of the end of the "War to End All Wars". Come hear historian, Andy Parks, reflect on WWI and the effects of the Armistice on the world as we know it today.

*Hot Dog, Chips  
& Drink*

### \$6.00

Fund raiser lunch benefiting the Vintage Aero Flying Museum

Home of The LaFayette Foundation, 511 c3

Vintage Aero Flying Museum • Platte Valley AirPark (18V) • 7507 CR39, Ft. Lupton CO

## ...2018 MONTHLY CONTEST THEMES

Month	Theme	Description
January	Under the Red Star	Any subject made in Russia/Soviet Union, in Russian/Soviet markings, any scale, any era. CANNOT be Russian vehicles in another country's marking, such as North Korean MiGs
February	Enter the Dragon	Any DML/Dragon kit. Bring proof (box lid or instructions)
March	Winter Storm Watch	Anything in a winter theme, any scale, any era
April	Club Kit Auction	Get rid of your trash and buy my treasure!
May	Club contest: Crazy 8's	Any subject in any scale where "eight" is a major feature. Examples, F-8 (not F-18), V-8 engines autos, M8 Greyhound, 8th Air Force markings, hull number or race car with an 8, etc.
June	Viva la Revolucion!	Civil wars, insurrections, uprisings, revolutions...you get the idea. Any scale, any era
July	Warrior Class	Any subject named after a class of warrior: chieftain, gladiator, corsair, pirate, commando, centurion, etc. Also, named after any Indian or native tribes. CANNOT be named after a specific warrior, such as a Patton, Sherman, Lee, Montgomery, etc.
August	That's Depressing!	Any civilian subject in any scale in a version and markings appropriate to the years 1925-1945
September	Trash Haulers	Cargo and transport (aircraft, vehicles, ships), military or civilian, any scale, any era
<b>October</b>	<b>SciFi and Fantasy</b>	<b>Any scale, any subject with a science fiction or fantasy theme</b>
<b>November</b>	<b>Better Late Than Never</b>	<b>Any model that would have fit any of the previous 2018 contest themes that you didn't get a chance to finish</b>
December	Cut Throat Gift Exchange	It's better to give than receive, but even better to steal what someone was given!

The Honor Harrington series (aka The Honorverse) is a huge Science Fiction space opera series by David Weber. Bill Berden was a big scifi fan and Bill, Matt Levesque and I would talk scifi at bfeakfast. He got me hooked on The Honorverse, A friend wrote to David Weber describing Bill's condition and David Weber dedicated the latest book (14) in the main series to Bill.



For Elijah Dimas and Bill Berden,  
two of the faces we've lost.  
God bless, guys.

## Bill Berden

**Bill Berden** was a [Manticoran](#) citizen and an officer of the [Royal Manticoran Navy](#).

Holding the rank of [Lieutenant](#) in 1922 PD, he served as tactical officer of the destroyer [HMS Arngrim](#) and fought in the [Battle of Hypatia](#).  
(HH14)

[http://honorverse.wikia.com/wiki/Bill\\_Berden](http://honorverse.wikia.com/wiki/Bill_Berden)

### **HMS Arngrim** **Hypatia System**

"The Sollies have launched, Ma'am!" **Lieutenant Bill Berden** announced.

The tactical officer's voice was crisp and professional, yet there was an odd softness to it, as well. Like everyone else aboard *HMS Arngrim*, he knew about his captain's engagement. In fact, he'd been the assistant TO aboard *Cinqueda* when it was announced, and he'd attended their engagement party aboard the heavy cruiser. In the wake of the Yawata Strike, it had been a welcome reaffirmation that life went on.

And now *Jayson* and *Cinqueda* were 60,000,000 kilometers from *Arngrim* and a tidal wave of missiles had just erupted from the Solarian battlecruisers.

## OCTOBER CONTEST

Club prez Bob Pridemore did this Colonial Viper. Complete with LED lighting.



Dale Summers brought this Pegasus "Raptor". It's 35th scale.



Dale also showed this 1/20th "Falke".



Dale also kit bashed a 25th scale AMT Enterprise D into this "Federation Fighter".



Another kit bash from Dale is this Klingon fighter made from a Monogram car kit and an AMT bird of prey.

Dale was inspired by the movie "Meg" to scratchbuild this "Sea Slider" from an AMT car kit and a much modified "A-Wing kit.



Another of Dale's modifications is this Klingon scout made from a bird of prey.



Dan Gallegos showed this 1/144th "X-Wing".



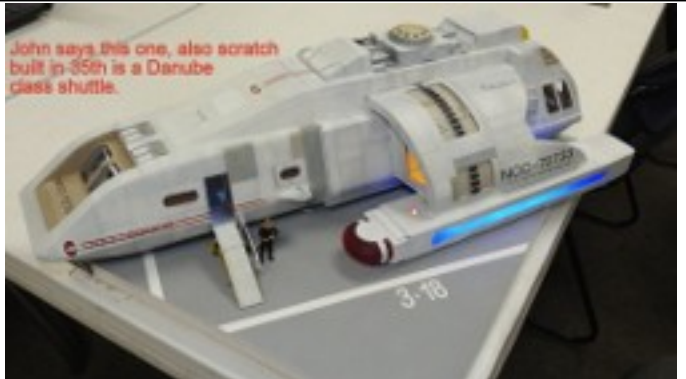
Dan also brought this 1/144th "Y-Wing".



Eric Cain built this Bandai 1/72nd TIE interceptor from Star Wars.



John says this one, also scratch built in 35th is a Danube class shuttle.





John Everett scratchbuilt this one using a modified

Lindberg boat hull.



John also scratch built this "Mars Rover". It's 35th scale.



Steve Luevane brought this 1/12th Bandai R2D2 for this month's Sci-Fi contest theme.



Cliff Davis showed this 72nd Hasegawa "Van Ship" that had won a gold at Telford in 2013.



Steve also did this Hasegawa 48th scale Ju-87. Steve used Eagle Cal decals on the kit.



John Trueblood brought in his highly detailed Avia S.199k kit bashed from an Eduard 109 G and a Hobbycraft kit. It's 48th scale.





Henry Jackson showed this Modelhaus '56 Mercury an all resin kit. It's 1/24th scale.



And Dan's 48th Tamiya M-4 Sherman with an added a cable and a one piece transmission cover

## FIRST WORLD WAR BATTLEFIELD IN VERDUN STILL A DANGER

[ITV REPORT ^](#) | 7 August 2018 at 5:50pm | ITV [News](#) Europe Editor James Mates

### First World War battlefield in Verdun still a danger with thousands of exploded shells 100 years on

FIRR be visited because of unexploded shells. Some 300,000 soldiers were killed in the Battle of Verdun between France and Germany from February to December 1916. During the onslaught, around six million shells - including many containing mustard gas - were fired by the opposing sides. One million of those failed to explode. Dozens of unexploded shells are unearthed every day.

At the end of The Great War, France bought the battlefield land from villagers and designated it a "red zone", and since then it has been inaccessible to the public. For years, bomb disposal experts have slowly been removing the ordinances, finding dozens of shells a day, but experts fear the work may yet require another century to be [completed](#).

The Battle of Verdun cost 300,000 lives. The land on which Verdun was fought was originally agricultural land, fields upon fields. But except for shell removal squads, nobody has set foot there since the war's end, and the area now resembles a forest.

Pierre Moreno, one of the bomb experts, told ITV News he thinks it will take years to clear the land.

"There are still tonnes and tonnes," he said.

"There will be decades, centuries, of work for us, because the ammunition is buried and every year it is rising naturally to the surface."

Experts believe it may take another 100 years to clear the forest. This year alone, some 500 tonnes of shells have been removed from the ground, and are currently being stored until they are disposed of by way of controlled explosion. Experts fear that the land make never be able to be used again - certainly not for agricultural purposes.

While those who died in the Battle of Verdun are remembered 100 years on, the legacy it inflicted upon the land on which it was fought continues to be felt too.

# 1 MONTH TO MARS! NASA'S INSIGHT LANDER NEARING RED PLANET TOUCHDOWN

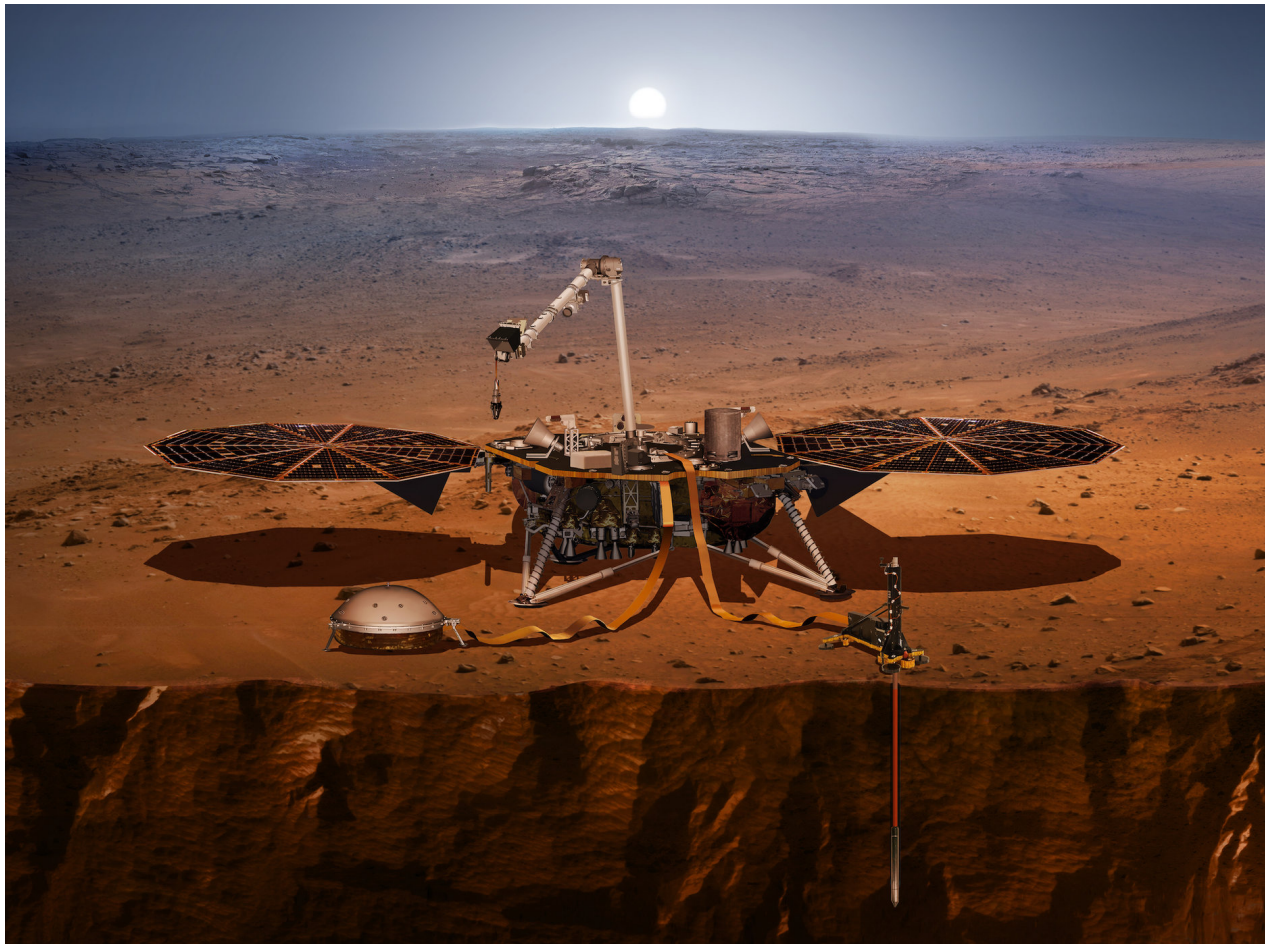
By [Mike Wall, Space.com Senior Writer](#) | October 25, 2018 10:00pm ET

## One month from today, Mars will welcome a new robotic resident that seeks to probe the planet's innards.

NASA's InSight lander is scheduled to touch down just north of the Martian equator on the afternoon of Nov. 26, bringing a nearly seven-month space trek to an end. [InSight launched](#), along with the two tiny Mars Cube One (MarCO) cubesats, atop a United Launch Alliance [Atlas V](#) rocket from California's Vandenberg Air Force Base on May 5.

Advertisement

InSight's entry, descent and landing sequence will be harrowing, as all Red Planet touchdown attempts are. [[NASA's InSight Mars Lander: 10 Surprising Facts](#)]



Artist's illustration of NASA's InSight lander at work on the Martian surface.

*Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech*

The solar-powered spacecraft will barrel into the Martian atmosphere at 14,100 mph (22,700 km/h), then deploy a big parachute to slow its descent. As the lander nears the surface, it will pop free of

its back shell and parachute, touching down softly with the aid of 12 descent engines about 6 minutes after getting its first taste of Mars' air.

That touchdown will come on a high-elevation equatorial plain called Elysium Planitia, a mere 370 miles (600 kilometers) from Gale Crater, where NASA's car-size Curiosity rover landed in August 2012.

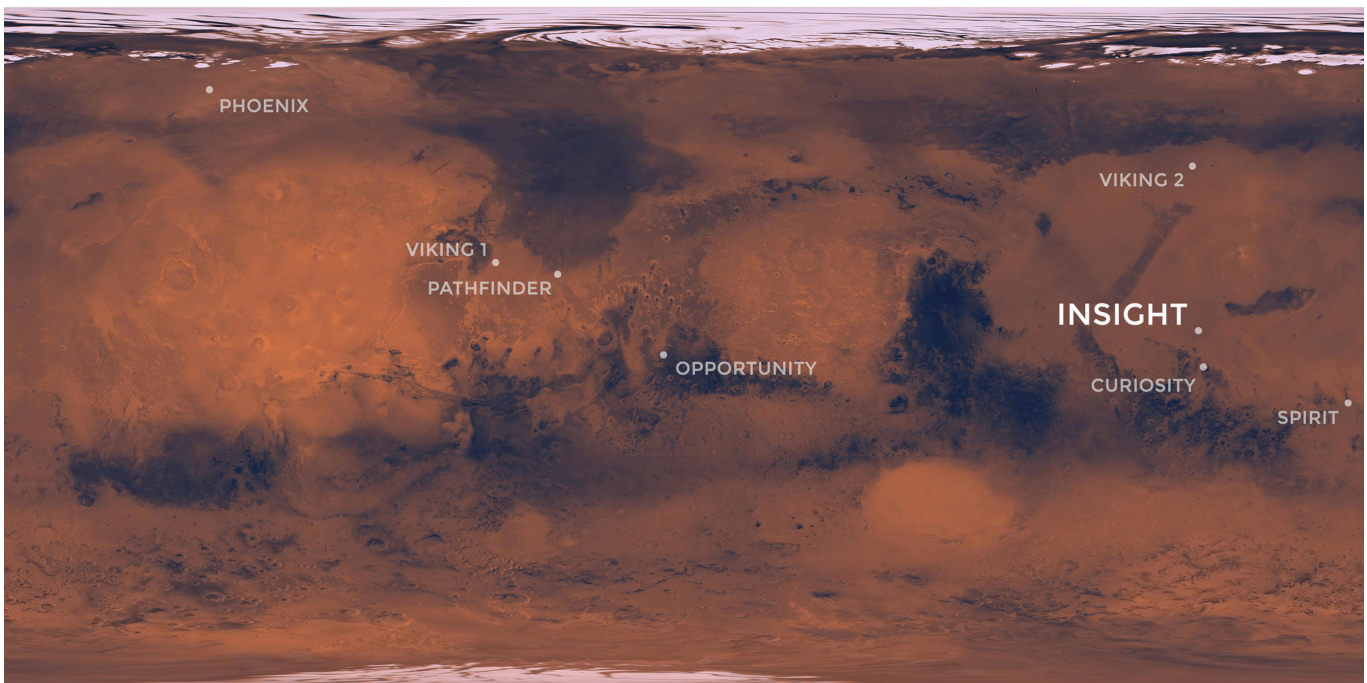
Elysium Planitia is "as flat and boring a spot as any on Mars," NASA officials [wrote in a statement](#) Wednesday (Oct. 24). And that's why the InSight team chose to land there — for safety's sake.

At Elysium, "there's less to crash into, fewer rocks to land on and lots of sunlight to power the spacecraft," NASA officials added. "The fact that InSight doesn't use much power and should have plenty of sunlight at Mars' equator means it can provide lots of data for scientists to study."

InSight won't be investigating surface features, so the "boring" part is no drawback. The lander totes a burrowing heat probe and a suite of superprecise seismometers; observations by both instruments should reveal a great deal about the [Red Planet's internal structure and composition](#), mission team members have said.

In addition, InSight (whose name is short for "Interior Exploration using Seismic Investigations, Geodesy and Heat Transport") will perform a radio-science experiment using its communications gear. This work will track the tiny wobbles of Mars' rotational axis, revealing [details](#) about the [size](#) and composition of the planet's core.

The various data gathered by the \$850 million [InSight mission](#) over its roughly two Earth-years of operation should help scientists better understand how rocky planets form and evolve, NASA officials have said.



NASA's InSight lander will touch down Nov. 26, 2018, on Elysium Planitia, just north of Mars' equator.

*Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech*

And about the MarCO twins: Those briefcase-size spacecraft are embarked on a demonstration

mission, which aims to show that cubesats can indeed explore deep space. Things are going well so far. One of the twins recently [beamed home a photo of Mars](#) — the first Red Planet image ever captured by a cubesat.

The MarCO craft will also attempt to beam [home](#) to Earth data from InSight during the lander's touchdown attempt on Nov. 26. But this is not a crucial responsibility for the duo; other NASA spacecraft, such as the venerable Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter, will do this relay work as well.

*Mike Wall's book about the search for alien life, "Out There," will be published on Nov. 13 by Grand Central Publishing. Follow him on Twitter [@michaeldwall](#). Follow us [@Spacedotcom](#) or [Facebook](#). Originally published on [Space.com](#).*

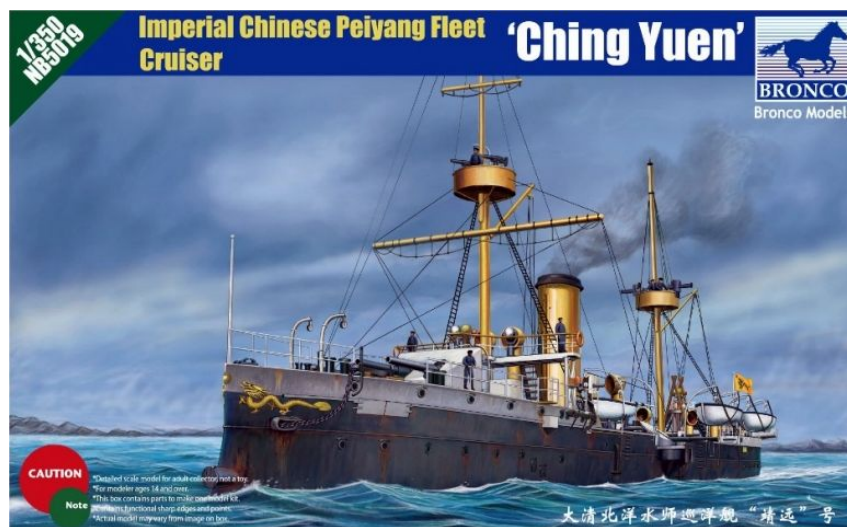
## DIVERS DISCOVER 100-YEAR-OLD 'TIME SULE' WRECK OF A CHINESE WARSHIP A CENTURY AFTER IT WAS LOST TO THE DEPTHS OF THE YELLOW SEA DURING THE FIRST SINO-JAPANESE WAR

By [PHOEBE WESTON FOR MAILONLINE](#)

PUBLISHED: 06:11 EDT, 27 September 2018 | UPDATED: 10:52 EDT, 27 September 2018

Divers have discovered the wreck a Chinese warship a century after it was lost to the depths of the Yellow sea. Researchers had been hunting for several years before they found the incredible 'time capsule' of a wreck. It was identified thanks to a gold-gilded wooden plaque with Jingyuan written on it. It went down in the Yellow sea during the first Sino-Japanese war in September 1894, with only seven out of 270 crewmen surviving. Experts managed to pinpoint the site by looking through historical documents and photographs taken by a Japanese sailor before it sank.

### WHAT WAS THE JINGYUAN WARSHIP?



ED Yes I have both protected cruisers and both barbette ironclad battleships in my stash and a book on the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-95.



The ship was built in a German shipyard called Vulkan and then incorporated into a Chinese fleet in the late 1880s.

Jingyuan was referred to as a 'gunboat' by its German designers but was referred to as a cruiser by the Chinese, despite the fact it had large calibre guns.

The ship went down in the Yellow sea during the Sino-Japanese war in September 1894, with only seven out of 270 crewmen surviving.

Experts say there are more than 500 relics on the ship including old weapons, ceramics and leather goods.

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Researchers led by China's National Cultural Heritage Administration say that the ship is 39 feet (12 metres) below the surface.

Experts say that there are more than 500 relics on the ship including old weapons, ceramics and leather goods, writes [CNN](#).

It went down during a conflict between the Qing Empire which ruled China until 1912 and the Empire of Japan.

The ship is resting upside-down, experts say.

'It's like a time capsule sealing history inside,' Jiang Bo, an archaeologist at the National Centre of Underwater Cultural Heritage in China told Pickle.

Jingyuan, which had a sister ship called Laiyuan, was divided into 66 waterproof compartments that were filled with cork.

The ship's main weapon was a eight-inch (20cm) Krupp cannon with two six-inch (15cm) Krupp guns on either side of the deck.

'Even the German navy didn't have a ship with so many cutting-edge technologies', Dr Bo said. 'It's a crucial reference for us to better understand the world's naval history.'



The ship (pictured) was built in a German shipyard called Vulkan and then incorporated into a Chinese fleet in the late 1880s. It went down in the Yellow sea during the first Sino-Japanese war in September 1894, with only seven out of 270 crewmen surviving



Researchers had been hunting for several years before they found the ship, which was identified thanks to a golden plaque with Jingyuan written on it



Researchers led by China's National Cultural Heritage Administration say that the ship is 39 feet (12 metres) below the surface



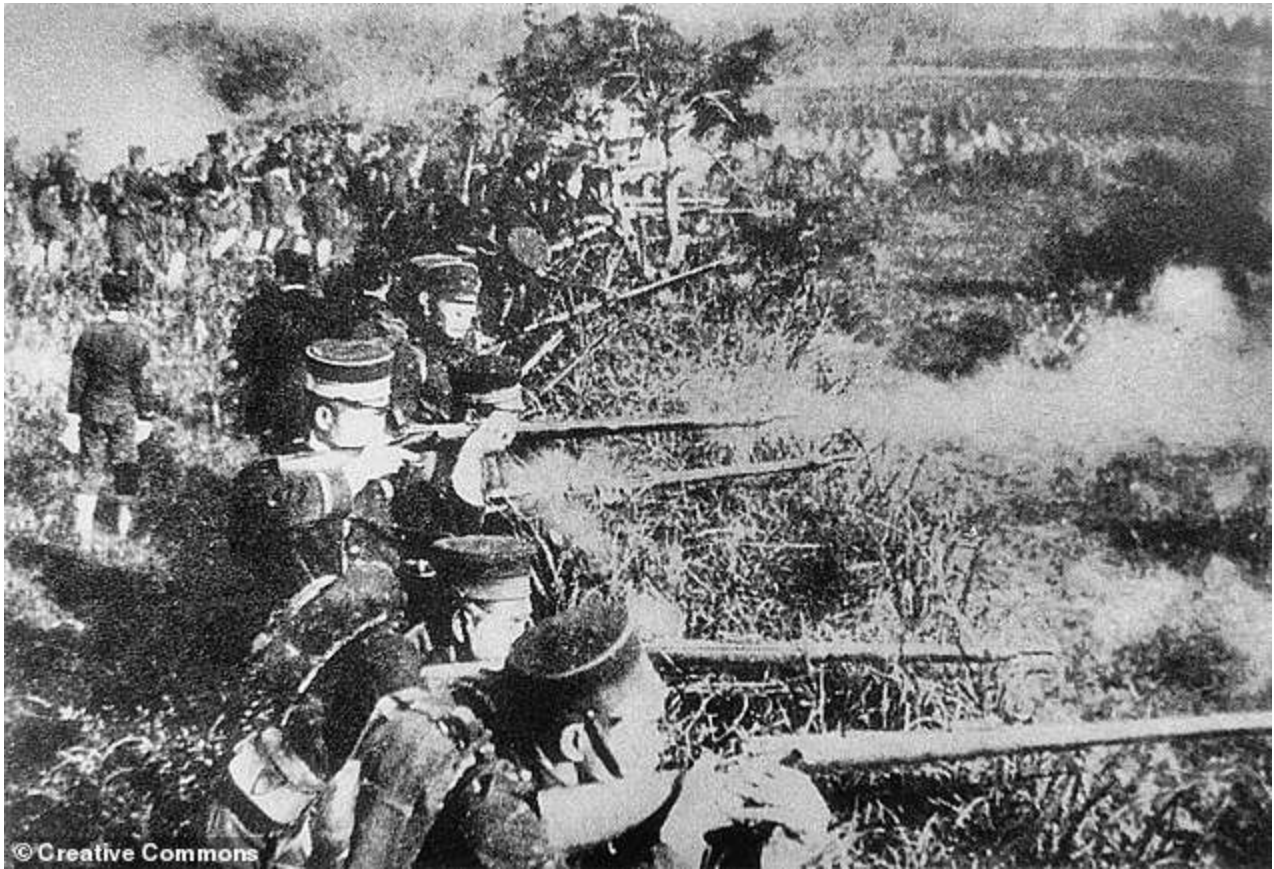
Jingyuan was referred to as a 'gunboat' by its German designers but was referred to as a cruiser by the Chinese, despite the fact it had large calibre guns (remains, pictured)

The ship also had two 1.8-inch (5cm) long guns, five 1.5 inch (4cm) Hotchkiss guns and two torpedo tubes.

When Jingyuan and Laiyuan arrived in China in 1888 they were assigned to the Beiyang Fleet.

Both ships were in the Battle of the Yalu River on 17 September 1894.

Early on in the battle, the captain of Laiyuan moved in aggressively against the Japanese squadron but was severely damaged as a result.



Pictured are soldiers from the Imperial Japanese Army firing their Murata Type 22 rifles in 1984. The first Sino-Japanese War was between 25 July 1894 and 17th April 1895



When Jingyuan and Laiyuan arrived in China in 1888 they were assigned to the Beiyang Fleet.



Both ships were in the Battle of the Yalu River on 17 September 1894



Experts say that there are more than 500 relics on the ship including old weapons, ceramics and leather goods

The Japanese flying squadron, led by Admiral Tsuboi Kozo, fired at Jingyuan for more than an hour and at 16:48 the ship burst into flames.

After a large explosion it rolled over and sank, reports say.

The first Sino-Japanese War was between 25 July 1894 and 17th April 1895.

The Qing Empire and the Empire of Japan were mainly fighting for influence over Korea and after more than six months of fighting the Qing government initiated the peace process.

It was the first time that regional dominance in East Asia was shifted from China to Japan.

## CHINESE NAVY HAS DEPLOYED UPGRADED H-6 BOMBERS THAT CARRY ADDITIONAL ANTI-SHIP MISSILES

**TOPICS:** [Bomber](#) [China](#) [H-6](#) [Naval Aviation](#)

Satellite photos taken in early September show that China's People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) has received upgraded Xian H-6J bombers that are designed to carry additional anti-ship cruise missiles.

The images, captured on 7 September, show that the first four H-6Js, which are believed to be the naval variant of the upgraded H-6K flown by the air force, were on the ground at the PLANAF air base at Guiping-Mengshu in Guangxi, The Diplomat reports.



POSTED BY:USA FEATURES MEDIAOCTOBER 12, 2018

“The aircraft at Guiping-Mengshu are assessed to be a variant of the H-6K, which has been in service with the People’s Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) since about 2011,” IHS Jane’s reported Thursday, without providing specifics on the H-6 variant.

Already reported last week as a possibility, seems now to be confirmed: the first four H-6J naval bombers were spotted on the ramp at Guiping-Menshu on 9/7/18. That would fit to the 8th Naval Air Division, 23rd Regiment within the Southern Theater Command.



The Diplomat notes further:

The H-6Js are presumably replacing H-6G maritime striker bombers, which first entered service with the PLANAF in the early 1990s. The PLA South Sea Fleet currently operates an H-6G regiment consisting of approximately 14-18 aircraft. In comparison to the older variant, the H-6J is thought to be able to carry about three times the number of anti-ship missiles, and at 3,500 kilometers boasts an increased combat radius of around 50 percent.

With the presumed extended combat range, the new PLANAF bombers, likely part of the 23rd Regiment, 8th Naval Aviation Division assigned to the PLA Southern Theater Command, would be capable of conducting sorties and patrols over nearly the entirety of the South China Sea with two mid-air refuels. (This data is derived from publicly available information on the H-6K.)

As for the anti-ship missiles, the Missile Defense Advocacy Group notes they are YJ-12 ASCMs with a range of 400 km (+/- 250 miles), depending on the altitude at which they are launched, and capable of reaching speeds of Mach 3. The missiles are fitted with a 200 kg (~ 400 lb) high explosive warhead.

The missile is said to be capable of in-flight evasive maneuvering to avoid anti-missile defenses before striking targets and is thought to be one of China's most capable anti-ship weapons.

Upgrades to the H-6J variant include new, lighter airframes, new fuel-efficient D-30-KP2 turbofan engines, better avionics, and full glass cockpit for better visibility. In addition, the new versions have been fitted with long-range surface search radar coupled with an electro-optical targeting pod for acquiring targets. It should be noted that the H-6J is designed primarily for anti-ship operations. The bombers are capable of carrying up to seven YJ-12 missiles.

**Analysis:** Satellite imagery captured just the four H-6J variants on the airfield in Guangxi but it is a safe bet to assume that China is upgrading additional H-6s to the "J" variant to a full regiment (~20 planes).

As China's naval aviation capabilities advance, objectives are changing as well. No longer just a defense force, the upgraded H-6J's indicate that Beijing wants its naval bomber force to project power as well. These new designs, with their added payload capability, are designed to do just that. These jets are not stealthy, however, which makes them more easily targetable than U.S. bombers. That said, they may not have to be if they fly within established air defense zones when launching their payloads at allied ships.

And if China does indeed upgrade a regiment of these bombers, it will give Beijing a potent power projection platform that dramatically increases risks for the U.S. Navy and other allied ships operating in the Indo-Pacific and the South China Sea.

To that end, China has dramatically stepped up combat patrols in the East China Sea and South China Sea using its H-6 bomber fleet (numbering about 40 aircraft) in recent years. The H-6J's indicate that those patrols are likely to increase.

# THE LONG MARCH OF THE CHINESE NAVY

By **FRANK LAVIN** [September 26, 2018 6:30 AM](#)



The Chinese aircraft carrier *Liaoning* takes part in drills in the western Pacific, April 2018. (Stringer/Reuters) Over time, the expanded navy will push China to new doctrines and new missions.

With the launch of its second aircraft carrier, China has enhanced its position in the front ranks of military powers and prompted questions as to the ultimate purpose of its navy. The Chinese navy, formally known as the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), is expanding and will be doing so for years — decades — to come. Some of this is the natural consequence of being the navy of a country in economic ascendancy. Some of this is bureaucratic politics; the PLA is represented on the Communist Party Central Committee, and the PLA answers to the Chinese Communist Party, not the Chinese government. But some of this, the interesting part, is what's left after one accounts for normal economic growth and institutional self-interest. We might not just be seeing an updated navy or a more potent navy; we might be seeing a different navy, with a different mission.

The axiom here is that in the short run, doctrine determines capabilities, but in the long run, capabilities determine doctrine.

So in the short run, the PLAN will acquire the navy it needs to do its job, already expanding to resupply and safeguard the growing Chinese base structure in the South China Sea. And with one eye on the United States, the PLAN will advocate internally for more ships, bigger ships, better ships, along a new generation of ballistic missiles, all with enhanced range, speed, and lethality. The U.S. military terms the Chinese strategy A2/AD, for "anti-access/area denial." In other words, China need not match the U.S. ship-for-ship or weapon-for-weapon; it can still throw quite a punch.

None of this should surprise military analysts. As countries grow, they seek to project power.

But in the long run, this new navy will itself push the PLAN to new doctrines and new missions. No longer just territorial defense. No longer just Sea Lines of Communication, those maritime arteries that facilitate commerce and military [access](#). No longer just to intimidate or defeat countries in its near abroad, the “first island chain” in PLAN lexicon. Over the next few decades, China will increasingly discover that it has a broader mission.

How else to ensure its energy supplies from the Mideast? How to supply and protect its base in Djibouti? How best to signal to world powers, even a superpower, that China has arrived in the top tier of navies? When the frequency of PLAN port calls to Kenya, for example, exceed those of the Royal Navy or the U.S. Navy, well, draw your own conclusions. The highest-grossing movie in China this year is *Operation Red Sea*, about PLAN efforts to foil pirates. And if the anti-piracy operations result in a despot getting a thrashing, he had it coming, didn't he?

We do not know a lot about Chinese government decision-making, but we do know that the military tends to get what it wants. After all, there is no independent oversight, no contrarian voices, and of course no opposition parties.

The most important part of this trajectory will be with the PLAN aircraft carriers. With its second carrier now launched, China will join the U.S. as one of the two countries operating more than one heavy carrier. This figure masks the fact that the U.S. has eleven carriers in operation while the PLAN will have only two. And naval warfare experts tell us the U.S. carriers are better as well. Hardly a match. Hardly a match today, that is.

But the PLAN has three geographical commands (North, East, and South), and all three of them will insist on a carrier, at which time the first carrier, a rebuilt Soviet ship, will be relegated to a training command. So they will have four carriers soon enough.

## COMMENTS

Not today or tomorrow, but at some point the new doctrine kicks in, and China establishes an “Overseas Command” perhaps analogous to the French navy's “Territoire Outre Mer” Command. It will have its own carrier as well, under a command dedicated entirely to missions beyond the near abroad. Given that the U.S. carriers are dispersed against global missions and China's are largely Asia-Pacific, the five-to-eleven ratio is less reassuring. China's carrier strategy will be the clearest answer to the question of its navy's ultimate purpose. With five carriers and an overseas command, it would no longer see itself as a regional power, but as a global power.

This five-carrier navy and overseas command would take some time to develop and is unlikely to occur in the next ten years. Which is just as well, as the U.S. Navy and those of other nations might also need ten years to think through their options,