

Chapter Contacts

Please forward to your members!



The Boys from Marietta have been busy, with a huge assortment of finished and in-progress models at their most recent meeting. Fortunately editor Rob Morales includes more than just a word or two of identification (and some newsletters don't even do that much!) he has does a good job of briefly 'explaining what each builder has done or is doing with his project.

But the most interesting to me, was a model with no markings at all so far! This Boeing B-737



It looks pretty unremarkable in primer, sitting in an interesting looking painting fixture!

....is in an EXTREME plain-vanilla stage now, but I can't wait to see Keith Scruton's Boeing 737 project come back completed. That's because his intent is replicating a somewhat kooky but very real 737-86N of Kulula Airlines in South Africa. This budget, no-frills airline obviously can't be accused of taking itself too seriously! "Flying 101" is the name given the real but very tongue-in-cheek livery, that could either be called a schoolhouse in aviation terminology or a new passenger training aid on "how to speak airplane" fluently. (The "DRAW" decal picture below may be the one to be used. Then again maybe not: they didn't say!)

Image result for kulula airlines 101

The picture below points out some of the better-known phrases of the MANY painted on what I call a dog-sick-green airplane ...or might charitably be called a shade of zinc chromate primer.

Here is a detail picture of just one part of the for-real airplane. To find more, simply Google "images Kulula Airlines Flying 101"

Above: another of Kulula's fleet. As mentioned, they don't seem to take themselves too seriously.

One of the fun things about receiving all these newsletters is the interesting subjects that become opened. For example, I knew a little about the Boeing 737, but touching on the Kulula 737's took me to a Wikipedia article https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boeing_737 which turned out to be fascinating. One small example, why they chose to NOT have doors to cover the MLG wheels, and how those wheel wells are "sealed". Or that more than five HUNDRED airlines have operated over seven THOUSAND 737's delivered (with many more thousands on order) to over 1,200 destination airports in 190 countries.

Changing subjects, Rob include several references to the Spanish-American War of 1898, including quiz questions and discussions of the Spanish ships involved in battles off Cuba's shores. The period was an era when major powers were in an arms race, which then meant big naval guns in armored ships. Spain, however was in a declining, weak position, with older, poorly protected ships going up against newer U.S. Navy ships, and they paid a heavy price. Being the second team in any war isn't much fun.

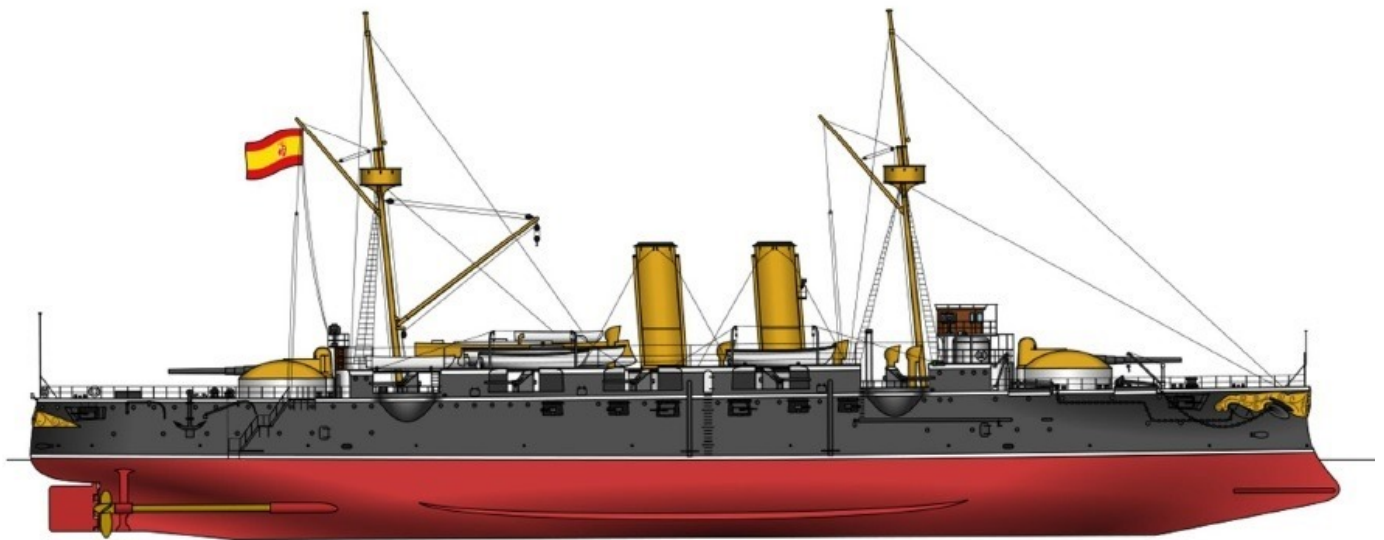


Perhaps I really should have known more before about that naval war in Cuban waters, but I didn't; so it took me a while to connect the dots of Rob having identified a picture as an "Hontoria 140 mm naval gun", to it being one of the virtually unprotected secondary armament mounts of the ship he pictured (below), AND that gun taken from her wreck to become the stateside prize-of-war in his picture. (Also not mentioned was that weapon today is located at Naval Support Facility, Anacostiathe old NAS Anacostia at Washington DC.)

In the process I learned that the weapon's name came its designer, a leading Spanish 19th century ordnance expert and naval officer named José González Hontoria, He had been a very accomplished naval armament designer in his prime, the 1870's. In fact, English armament companies had made him lucrative offers, trying to lure him away from his native Spain. But like most everything else that later happened to the Spaniards during the disastrous (for them) Spanish-American War, his innovations were by the time that war began at a minimum obsolescent, while he himself was already ten years dead when the war started.

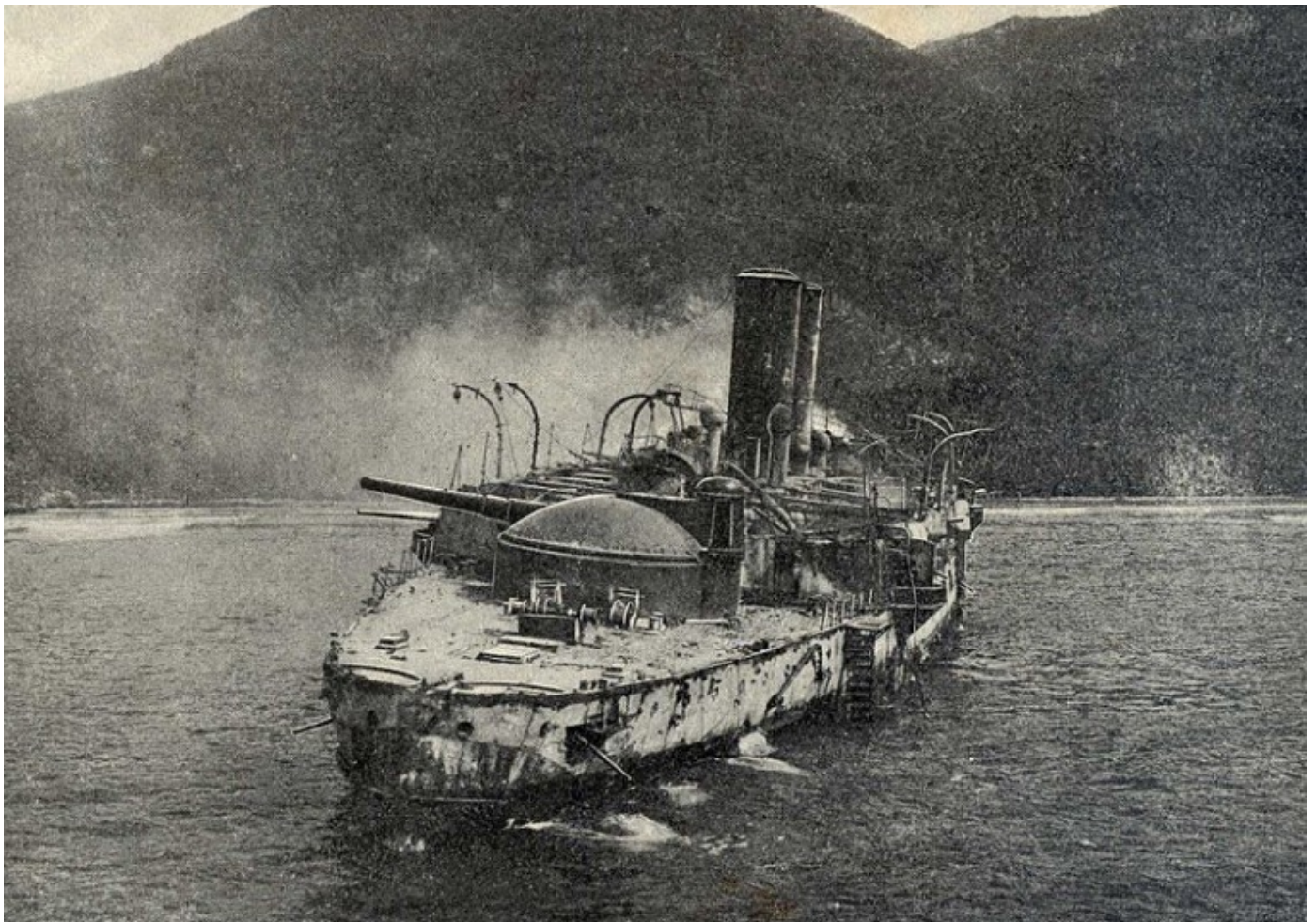
And then things really went downhill for Spain in their naval battle: defective gunpowder, incomplete crews, and fouled bottoms slowing their fewer, obsolescent, and overpowered ships.

A similar fate would await the Imperial Russian fleet when it met a suddenly modern Japanese Navy seven years later, at Tsushima.



Infante Maria Teresa-class Armored Cruiser Almirante Oquendo

The armored cruiser Almirante (Admiral) Oquendo was pounded horribly when, with the rest of the Spanish fleet, it tried to escape being bottled up in port at Santiago de Cuba. Running the blockade of more numerous, newer, faster, and more heavily armed American ships became sort of a Greek tragedy. No wonder one American commander told his crew “.....don’t cheer, boys; those poor devils are dying”.



With heavy casualties, guns destroyed, and afire with a threat of a magazine explosion, the dying Spanish captain ordered Almirante Oquendo beached and abandoned.

Many Spanish sailors who made it ashore to Cuban beaches met the same fate at the hands of the Cubans, as later would the Japanese sailors of Admiral Nishimura's "Southern Force" struggling ashore after their fleet had been annihilated. That was in another former Spanish possession at the 1944 Battle of the Surigao Strait in the Philippines. Many Japanese were met at water's edge by bolo-wielding Philippine natives who were VERY unhappy after several years of the brutal Japanese occupation of their homeland, as had Spanish sailors dragging themselves ashore in Cuba.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_cruiser_Almirante_Oquendo

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jos%C3%A9_Gonz%C3%A1lez_Hontoria