



The real CG-83336 in 1944, as part of USCG RESFLO-1 on D-Day, June 6, 1944.

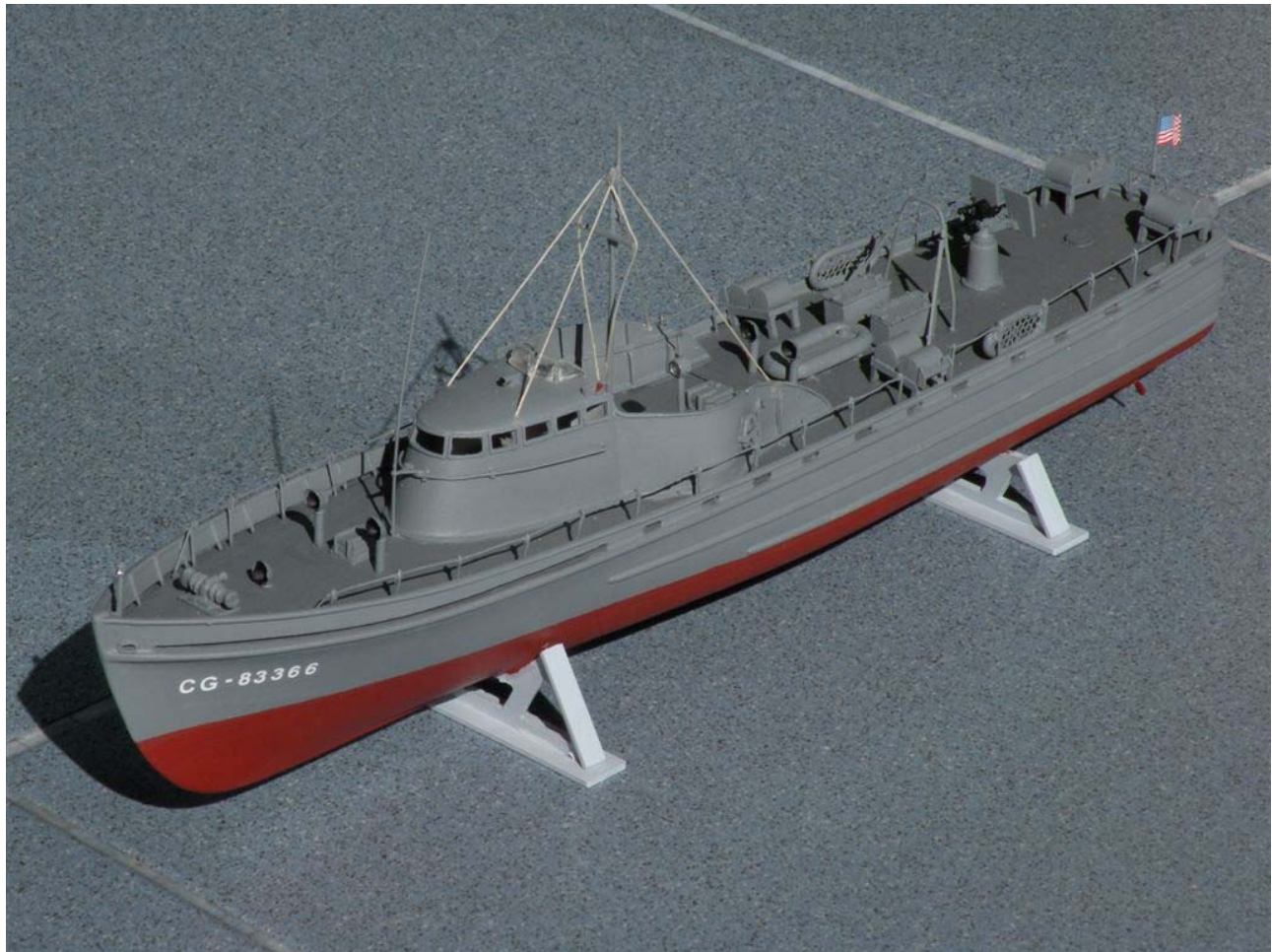
(collection of T. Garth Connelly)

Building an USCG 83-foot “Sub Buster”

*Article by T. Garth Connelly and Christian Sheppard-Capurro and Model built by
Christian Sheppard-Capurro Photos by Christian Sheppard-Capurro*



The finished model as built by Christian Sheppard-Capurro. (Christian Sheppard-Capurro photo)



Another view of the finished model. (Christian Sheppard-Capurro photo)

As a small boy, my father, a US Navy veteran of World War II, serving on *SC-699*, in the Philippines in 1944 through to 1946, would let me look through his old and cringingly and yellowed ONI-54 ship recognition manual. My favorite section was the one on Minor Combatants, which featured PT boats, Sub Chasers, the PGM (Patrol, Gun, Motor) or gunboat which was converted from the 110' Sub Chaser hull.

The one-page section also had one small photo of a small boat with a CG number on its bow and with a sailor manning a water-cooled .50-caliber machine gun, mounted on its foredeck speeding through the water. That photo was my first exposure to what I could come to know as the Wheeler Yacht Company-built 83-foot "Sub Buster" which was built for the United States Coast Guard just before and during the Second World War.

As a Minor Combatant aficionado, I was naturally drawn to these craft. They reminded me of PT boats, but, without torpedoes. As I grew older, I delved into the histories of these boats. What I found was that they had a rich and honorable history. A history which needed to be told, other

than in articles and in brief paragraphs describing them in books about the Coast Guard in the Second World War and about Coast Guard vessels in general.

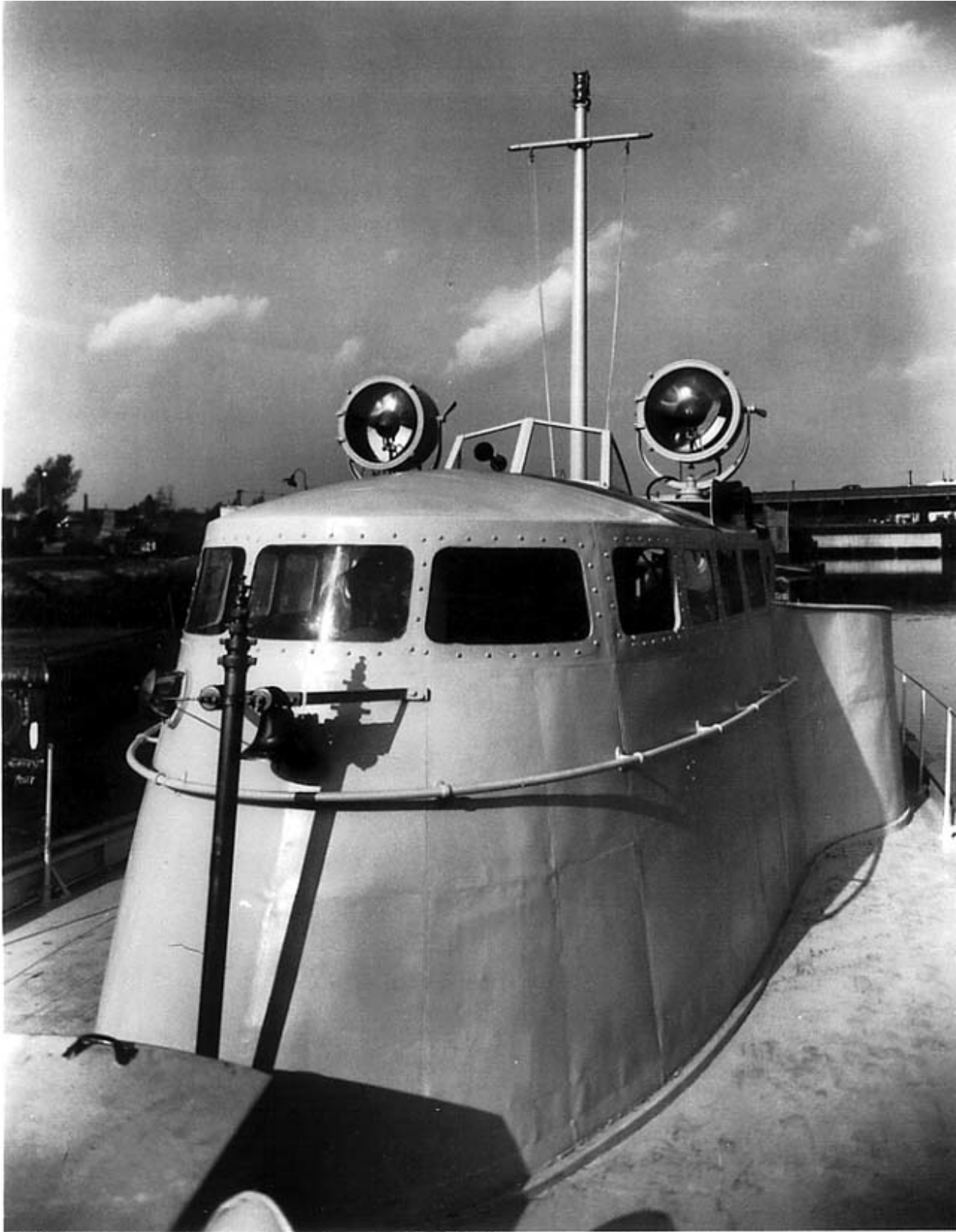
One day, I hope to write a book on these brave little ships.

These boats were eighty-three feet, two inches in length with a beam of sixteen feet, two inches. Their displacement was seventy-six tons and maximum draft was five feet, four inches. The hull form was round bilge and singled planked. Those boats which operated in Northern waters had their hulls strengthened.

Some units of this type were powered by either two Hall-Scott Defender marine engines of 600 horsepower each, and a few units were powered by two Sterling Viking II marine engines of 600 horsepower. These engines gave the boats a top speed of just over fifteen knots and they had a maximum operating range of two-hundred-fifteen miles and by 1945, they were fitted with SO-2 radar and some boats by 1945 were fitted with QBE series sonar.

In 1941, they were armed with one 1-Pounder gun and two .30-caliber machine guns, most likely Lewis guns. However, by 1945, all of the boats were armed with one 20mm Oerlikon gun, four depth charge racks, for Mark VI depth charges and some boats were fitted with launching racks for Mousetrap ASW rockets.

These boats, by 1945, were manned by one officer and thirteen enlisted men. This was similar to the crews of PT boats. Hull numbers 83300-83435 were fitted with an *Everdur* bronze wheelhouse. These wheelhouses were manufactured in Boston, Massachusetts and then, shipped by rail to the Wheeler Shipyard in New York. However, due to a shortage of bronze, later boats (hull numbers 83436-83529) were fitted with plywood wheelhouses.



An Everdur cast-bronze wheelhouse. (collection of T. Garth Connelly)



A good shot of the finished model. (Christian Sheppard-Capurro photo)

From 1941 to 1945, these cutters (all USCG vessels are called cutters) were used for coastal patrol duties, coastal convoy escort duty and for Air-Sea-Rescue duty. In preparation for the June 6, 1944 allied invasion at Normandy, sixty of these cutters were shipped to England to participate in the landings.



Mr. Sheppard did a very good job on this model. (Christian Sheppard-Capurro photo)

These sixty cutters became USCG RESFLO-1 (Rescue Flotilla 1) and were based at Poole, England. The boats of this Flotilla deployed in two rescue groups of thirty boats each on June 6, 1944. They were responsible for rescuing fifteen hundred men on that day.

After that, thirty of the boats were shipped back to the United States, where they resumed their more mundane duties. The Coast Guard kept twenty-four of the boats in European waters. The British Royal Navy received four of the boats, being transferred to them. Two of the cutters were lost in the European Theater of Operations (ETO).

In January of 1945, thirty of these cutters were sent to the Philippine Sea Frontier (PHILSEAFRON) under the control of the US Naval Seventh Fleet (COMSERV7THFLEET) to be designated as USCG PTC Flotilla Number One. The use of the designation of "PTC" indicates that these cutters were utilized in the Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) role. They operated out of Manicani Island, just south of the island of Samar near Leyte.

Since 1994, when I began to write monographs and books on Minor Combatants, I started a pseudo-tradition, in much the same way that the author Clive Cussler does when he has a model of every ship that he finds the wreck of and use in his novels, of having a model built of every type of vessel I write about.

I have had three 1:72 Revell *PT-109* kits built up as *PT-171*, *PT-174* and *PT-559* (with her quad-20mm "Elco Thunderbolt" gun mount). There is the Airfix 1:72 Vosper MTB built as *MTB-385*, a Revell 1:72 S-100 Klass Schnellboot as *S-204*. There is even a scratch-built model of my

late father's SC-699. The only torpedo boat that I don't have a model of is an Italian Regia Marina MAS boat. That is because I don't have the room for and cannot afford the Italeri 1:35 MAS boat.

... Maybe one day ... Maybe ...

Thanks to the Internet, I became aware of Mr. Christian Sheppard-Capurro, a modeler who lives on the "Rock of Gibraltar". Recently, I learned that he was making GRP plastic in various scales. One of the hulls was that of the Wheeler 83-foot USCG cutter. I contacted him to inquire if he would be willing to supply me with a hull so that I could write a review/assessment of it for him and post it on my website (www.ptboatworld.com). He agreed to do that. Then, he surprised me, to no end; he told me that he would build the model for me.

His first question was what color would I want the model painted in, I told him that I wanted it to be painted in the wartime gray. Mr. Sheppard-Capurro agreed to do that and then, he asked which boat that I wanted the model to depict. Because I just wanted a model of a "Sub Buster", I told him that I had no real preference as to a specific boat.

So, armed with that information, Mr. Sheppard-Capurro informed me that he was doing one of the boats which had a cast bronzed bridge. That was just fine by me.

I supplied him with the information regarding Measure 14 from the excellent website known as www.shipcamouflage.com. The site has become my "go to" site to learn about USN Camouflage Measures, and it is an invaluable resource for ship modelers and history buffs alike.

Measure 14, according to www.shipcamouflage.com, consisted of the following paints:

Vertical Surfaces:

Vertical surfaces from boot-topping to top of superstructure masses, Ocean Gray 5-O.
Pole masts, yards, slender upper works above level of top superstructure masses, Haze Gray, 5-H.

Horizontal Surfaces:

Horizontal surfaces, Deck Blue, 20-B.

Wood Decks.

Wood decks except on submarines and carriers shall be darkened to the color Deck Blue. Deck Blue paint shall be used in lieu of stain for this purpose.

Canvas Covers.

Canvas covers visible from the outside vessel are to be dyed a color corresponding to Deck Blue.

As with PT boats and all other Minor Combatants in the US Navy during World War II, the bottoms of the Coast Guard cutters were painted in an anti-fouling paint known as Copperoyd. That paint was once described to me as being a reddish-brown color, something approaching the hue of the rust colored automotive primer paint.



The finished model. (Christian Sheppard-Capurro photo)

Now, here is how Mr. Sheppard-Capurro built the model of the *CG-83366/USCG-11*:

Having been modeling Coastal Forces craft of various types in various scales for some years now I was aware of the PT Boat World website and the help freely offered to modellers by Garth so it was initially a pleasure to offer him one of my little fibreglass hulls when I learnt of his wish to own a model of one of these boats. I had already made the plug and mould for this boat mostly by using the wealth of information on the CG-83527 website.

As I prepared the hull for shipment I got inspired to completely build the model rather than just send the bare hull so I started by inserting a ply deck cut using the plans and which had been cambered using filler. The hull already incorporated the bulwarks; these had the scuppers cut out using a small cutting disc and a needle file. I used thin strips of wood to make the rubbing strips (2x2mm for the deck level strip and 1x1mm for the hull strips aft). The bulwark capping was fitted in the same way.

The wheelhouse design I preferred was the earlier curved version so I cut the floor and roof from thin ply, and curved thin plastic card around that to form the basic structure. I then sanded the roof to shape. Windows were cut using the plan and photos as a template and frames made

from 0.5x0.5mm plastic strip. The bridge wings are a very complex shape so I experimented with card until the desired shape was achieved and then used plastic card for these too.

The inside ribbing here and on the bulwarks is made from square section plastic extrusions. The fittings were partly scrounged from a Revell PT-109 kit, including the dinghy, 20mm, ammo boxes, vents, stern-gear, flag, ships wheel and searchlight. The mast is from an Airfix HSL and the stands are from a Vosper MTB. Scratch built fittings include the stanchions, depth charges and racks, hatches, antenna, bridge controls, klaxon, navigation lights, Carley floats, cleats and windlass.

Cyanoacrylate glue was used throughout, I find it best suited to this kind of work and it results in a strong model, essential if you have to post it. The color scheme represents the vessel during wartime but pre-D-day, I used the closest available paints so one day the model may need a re-paint to lend it more authenticity. The white hull numbers are from BECC. To sum up this was a relatively quick and easy build which I thoroughly enjoyed.

In conclusion, I am very pleased with the finished model and with Mr. Sheppard-Capurro's fine work. The model has become and will remain a valued addition to my model boat collection. It is of a type of vessel which I have loved since childhood, which had participated in a very important event in history.

For those of you who might wish to purchase one of Mr. Sheppard-Capurro's products, here is a price list of his offerings from him:

The prices in pounds (with p&p shown for one-hull orders);

- 1/72nd Small boats (30-54ft) are £20 (plus p&p £6).**
- 1/72nd Short boats (55-79ft) are £25 (plus p&p £8).**
- 1/72nd Medium boats (80-99ft) are £30 (plus p&p £10).**
- 1/72nd Long boats (100-119ft) are £35 (plus p&p £12).**
- 1/72nd Large boats (120-150ft) are £45 (plus p&p £15).**
- 1/72nd Minesweepers, Corvettes and sloops etc are quoted per order.**
- 1/35th Short boats are £45 (plus p&p £15).**
- 1/35th Medium boats are £60 (plus p&p £20).**
- 1/35th Long boats are £75 (plus p&p £25).**
- 1/24th scale is charged at £1.10 per ft of full-size boat (and 1/12th scale at 2.20/ft).**

3+ hulls orders get a discount and big p&p savings.

Payments by Paypal can be made to carole@gibraltar.gi

1/72nd and 1/35th scale hulls now come with a cambered deck molding included in the price, fitted on request.

What is available in 1/72nd scale so far;

BRITISH;

RN;

Fairmile A/C, Fairmile B, Fairmile D with and without torpedo scallops, Fairmile H,

all BPB MGB/MTB/MASBs 71.5ft, 70ft, 63ft, 60ft, all Vosper MTBs inc 60ft, 73ft, 70ft e.g. MTB 234, MTB 510, MTB102, Bloodhound, Thornycroft MTB, JS White MTB 253, MTB40K, 72ft RN HDML Motor Launch, BYMS minesweeper, Camper & Nicholson MGB/MTB series I and II, Denny SGB, Thornycroft 55ft CMB/MTB, 70ft Higgins MGB, 78ft Higgins MTB, 70ft and 77ft Elco MTB, all 4 sizes of Admiralty MFV (45ft, 62.5ft, 75ft, 90ft), 105ft and 126ft MMS, Brave, Gay & Dark class FPBs, Scimitar class FTB, MTB 538 and 539, TON and HAM class minesweepers, Ford Class SDB, Loyal Class RNXS fleet tender, 80ft WWI Elco ML, HMS Peacock, 30 & 45ft FMBs, HMS Tenacity, Bold Pioneer, Bird Class i.e. HMS Kingfisher,

RAF; Fairmile D LRRC, BPB 64ft Type I, 63ft Type II (Whaleback) and 68ft Type III (H&D) HSLs, CPB 70ft HSL/MTB, Vosper HSL, pre-war and 67ft Thornycroft HSLs, Miami HSL, Walton HSL, 60ft and 63ft General Service Pinnaces, Vosper 68ft RTTL, James & Stone 78ft MKIII RTTL, 43ft RSL, all STs, BPB Targets, Krogerwerft D-Boat, HAM IRV, Ex-Luftwaffe FLB, HMAFV Bridlington, Seal Class LRRSC, Celerity LRRC, 111ft BPB LRRC,

RASC;

BPB Generals 57ft HSTTL, BPB 68ft HSTTL, Thornycroft 69ft HSTTL, Thornycroft 73ft HSTTL, BPB Bird and Rivers class Fast Launches, and JS White Derby Winners Fast Launches, 78ft RSC Honours class,

USA;

Huckins 78ft PT Boat, Higgins 78.5ft PT Boat, Elco 70ft, 77ft and 80ft PT Boats, PT 810, USCG 83ft Wheeler, WWI and WWII 110' SC Subchasers, YMS minesweeper, 63ft, 85ft and 104ft USAF AVR rescue boats, PCF Swift, PC Subchaser, Nasty Class PTF,

AUSTRALIAN;

HDML RAN 80ft and standard 72ft versions, 80ft sea-ambulance (like Krawarree), Fairmile B, Ham and Ton Minesweepers, RAAF 60ft and 63ft Pinnaces (Kungah Maris), 63ft aircraft rescue launch ASR (Air Faith etc),

GERMAN;

KM Schnellboote; S38 E-Boat with foredeck, S7-13 E-Boat (corrects the boxy Airfix hull!), KM Raumboote; R108-126 R-Boat, R301-320 R-Boat and Luftwaffe FLB 500 series rescue boat.

ITALIAN;

Navy; Baglietto VAS (Vedetta Anti-Sommergibile), CRDA series I MS (Motosilurante), MAS series III (Motoscafo Armato Silurante), Aragosta IMS and BYMS minesweepers, 80ft Elco WWI ML, Higgins 78.5ft, Vosper 72.5ft. Guardia Di Finanza; Dark FPB, Fairmile B "Canadiese", also Air Force; BPB 63ft Whaleback ASR.

FRENCH;

All VTBs, SC Subchaser, HDML, Vosper 72.5ft MTB, Fairmile B, HAM class IMS, YMS.

CANADIAN, NEW ZEALAND and SOUTH AFRICAN vessels are mostly already listed above.

Several hulls are also available in 1/35th and 1/24th scales including:

1/24th scale hulls; Fairmile A/C 110ft, Fairmile B 112ft, Fairmile D 115ft (with and without scallops), HDML 72ft, Vosper 68ft RTTL, Dark Class 72ft FPB, RN BPB 71.5ft MGB/MTB (MGB deck and wheelhouse also available), RAF BPB 64ft HSL, RN Thornycroft 75ft MTB, RAF 41.5ft BPB Seaplane Tender, RASC 45ft Rivers Class fast Launch, RASC 48ft Derby Winners fast Launch, Elco 80ft PT Boat, S 38 E-Boat 114ft, MAS 555 Italian MTB 63ft, Brave/Perkasa 100ft.

1/35th scale hull and deck; Fairmile D with and without scallops, Fairmile B, HDML, Higgins LCP(L). Coming soon; Higgins PT Boat and Nasty PTF.

Also 1/12th scale hull; RAF 46ft Vosper Crash Tender.

I have probably left a few out so ask if you don't see it.

Photos of his models and products can be found here:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/25721684@N00/sets/72157632269542118/>

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His website is:

www.mtbhulls.co.uk

And, via postal mail and at the following telephone and fax numbers at:

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I wholeheartedly recommend (with the HIGHEST recommendation) Mr. Sheppard-Capurro's hulls and model-building skills! Do check him out.