Build Log 8: USS The Sullivans (DD-537)

Figure 1. The Sullivans off Ponape, 2 May 1944

Start Date: January 29, 2021

End Date: June 7, 2021

Manhours: 101.5

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Introduction

This project will build Trumpeter Model's 1/350 scale USS The Sullivans (DD-537) kit and is being built for a USN World War II veteran.

Figure 2. Very Nice Box Top Art.

The Trumpeter kit is very basic and does not include any photo-etched parts. It reminds me of ship models that I built as a kid; pretty primitive. That's okay since I plan on customizing it extensively. Essentially, all I really want is the hull and superstructure; everything else will be replaced. The kit does scale out to a proper Fletcher Class destroyer. I expect a fine looking model when I am done.

The kit will be upgraded using 3D-printed and photo-etched brass parts. I am using the following:

- Black Cat Model's 1943 Square Bridge Fletcher detail set. This set provides all the weapons, directors, whale boats, rafts and a multitude of small fittings.

- 3D-printed plastic smokestacks from Shapeways.com.

- 3D-printed CIC, bridge deck and pilot house from Model-Monkey.com. The existing kit parts are really bad.

- Gold Metal Model's Fletcher Class photo-etch detail set. This set was upgraded specifically for the Trumpeter kit and will provide most of the fine detail.

- Infini's Fletcher Class mast detail set. While this makes some of the Gold Medal Model parts redundant, the brass mast will be a significant upgrade.

- Main deck nonskid is photo-etched brass from L'Arsenal.

I am building The Sullivans in her 1943 configuration in which she experienced the Pacific War.

The ship was painted in Measure 21—the Navy Blue System. All vertical surfaces are navy blue 5-N without exception and the horizontal surfaces are deck blue 20-B. Any canvas covers, bags, etc. are also deck blue. The 1943 mixture for navy blue is a lighter shade than the 1945 mix.

Hull Construction

The hull consists of two parts: The upper hull and lower hull. The model allows the builder to build a full hull or a water line model. I always build full hulls and create what in the modeling world is called a museum model.

To create holes for the mounting pedestals, I carefully drilled pilot holes into the bottom hull piece and gradually increased the size of the hull by using increasing larger bitts in a drill set to very low speed. If you drill the holes at high speed, the plastic will deform and tear.

The two hull pieces were checked for kit and then clamped together. I brushed plastic "welding" cement along the seam and capillary action sucked the glue into the joint. Once the glue had set, I wet sanded the seam to remove any excess glue.

Figure 3. Gluing the Upper and Lower Hull Together.

While I was waiting for the hull glue to dry, I built an auxiliary build stand. My usual build stand is being used by the Bainbridge project.

Figure 4. The Auxiliary Build Stand.

I added the propeller shafts and struts to the hull. The parts needed a bit of work until they all fit together properly. I have a little bit of gap maintenance to do on the struts.

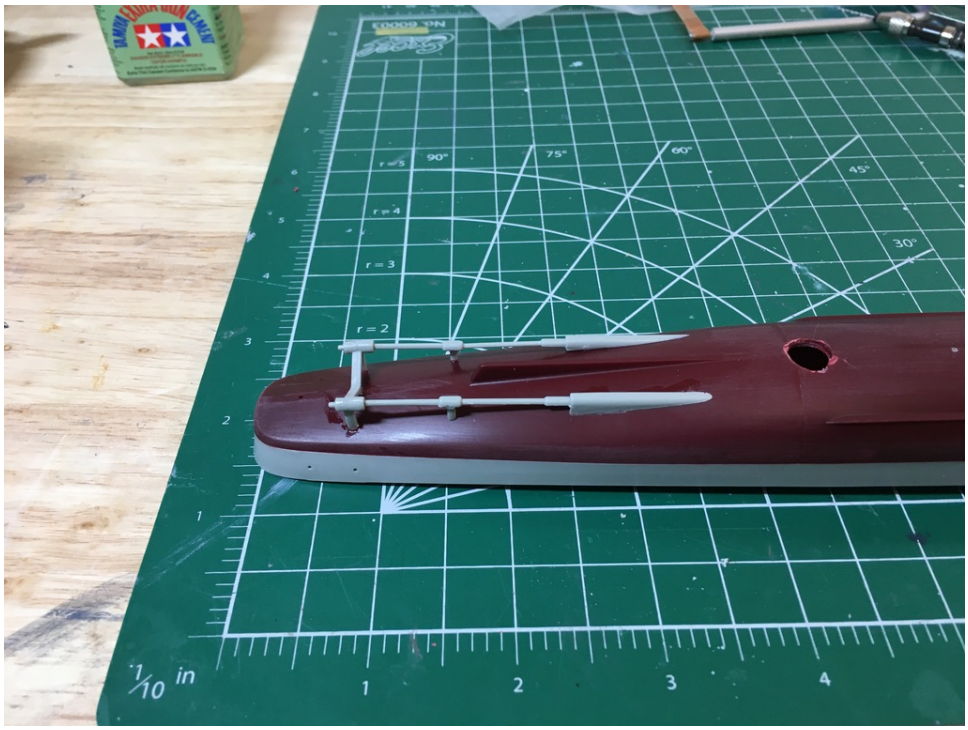

Figure 5. Propeller Shafts are Built. Note the Mounting Hole.

The propellers and rudder will be added later.

The next step was to clean up the main deck. This consisted of carefully scrapping off the anchor chain and chocks and filling most the holes in the deck. The holes were for various weapons and fittings from the kit. I also drilled holes for anchor chain. I can tell I need to replace the two molded on capstans; they are too small. In addition, there is only one capstan. I will add an anchor brake when I install the anchor chain.

I intend to paint the hull and main deck separately and then glue them together. This should significantly simplify my masking job.

I primed the hull with Badger black primer, a first for me. According to the talking heads on the internet, a warship should be primed with black since it will take less paint layers to add the blues and grays and missed spots are harder to see.

After priming, I masked the upper hull and sprayed the lower hull with Tamiya hull red at 15 psi.

Once the hull red had cured, I masked the lower hull and used pieces of 2mm tape as spacers for the black boot topping.

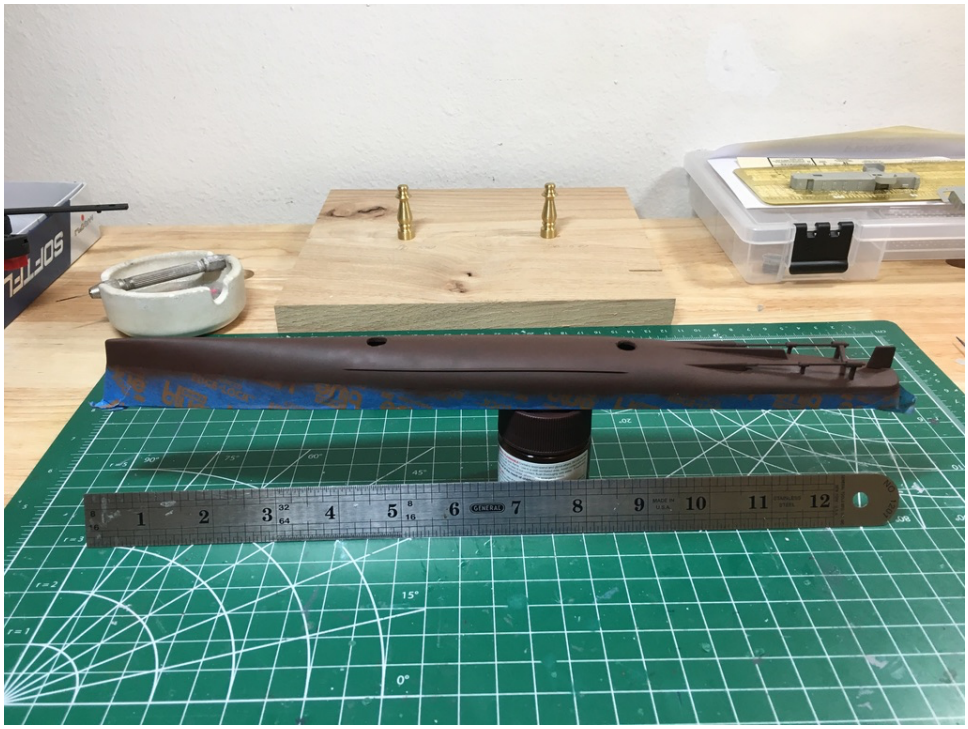

Figure 6. The Hull Red has been Airbrushed.

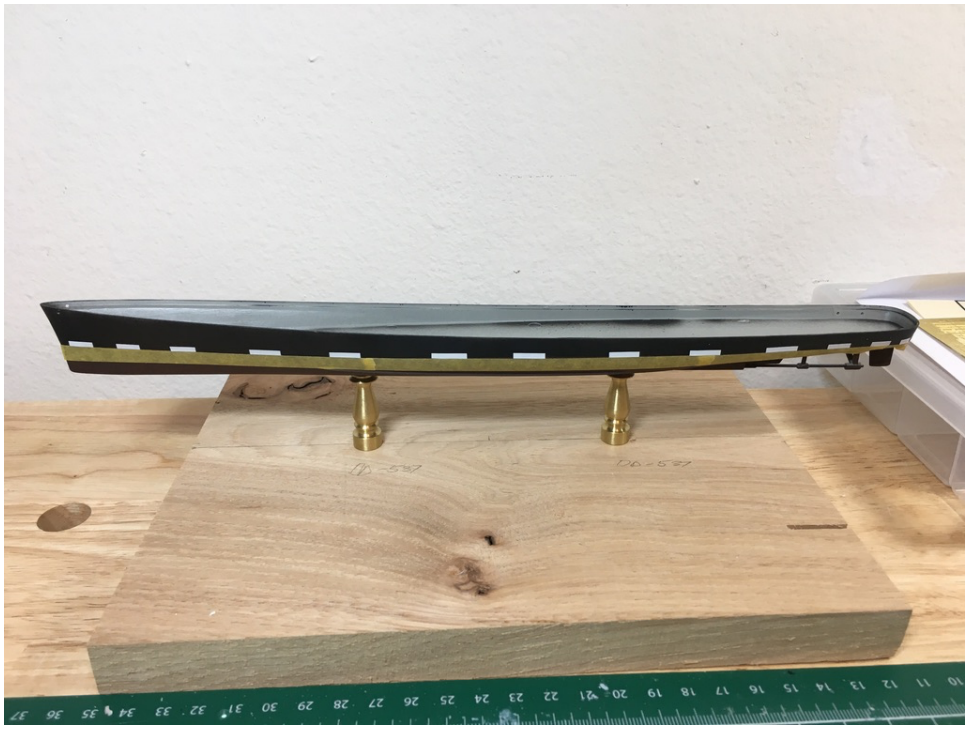

Figure 7. Spacers for the Black Boot Topping.

Once the spacers were in place, I ran masking tape along the top edge of the spacers and then removed the spacers. The end result is a uniform 2mm high area that was airbrushed with Tamiya semi-gloss black at about 15 psi.

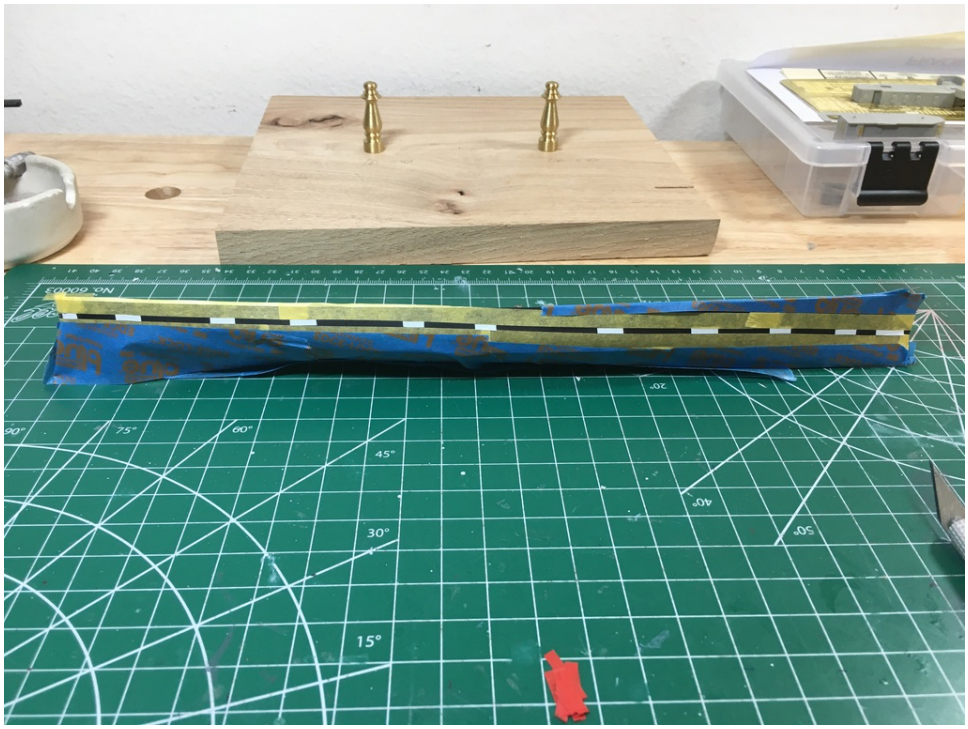

Figure 8. Ready to Remove the Spacers.

Once the black boot topping was dry, I masked the boot topping and removed the masking tape from the upper hull. The upper hull was airbrushed with Model Master navy blue at 15 psi.

When I removed the masking tape, I did not have any paint adhesion problems, a very nice outcome. I think the Badger primer coupled with high quality paint did the trick.

The main deck was airbrushed with AK Interactive deck blue at 15 psi. Once the paint had dried, the main deck was glued to the hull. I managed to get some glue on the hull, so I had to touch up the hull paint.

The final step in hull preparation was to paint and install the propellers. The propellers were primed with gray primer and then hand painted with Italeri glossy brass acrylic. A lighter primer is used with metallic, light and/or bright colors.

On a technical note, in twin screw steam-powered ships, the starboard propeller rotates clockwise, and the port propeller rotates counterclockwise.

Figure 9. The Propellers.

The hull is now complete.

Fitting Out

In traditional ship building, when the hull is complete and sent down the ways, the hull is towed to a fitting out quay. The fitting out phase completes the ship in all respects. My tradition is that fitting out begins when the hull is complete and mounted on the working stand.

In this case, the hull was super glued to the pedestals (AKA lamp finials) and I'm ready to start on the superstructure.

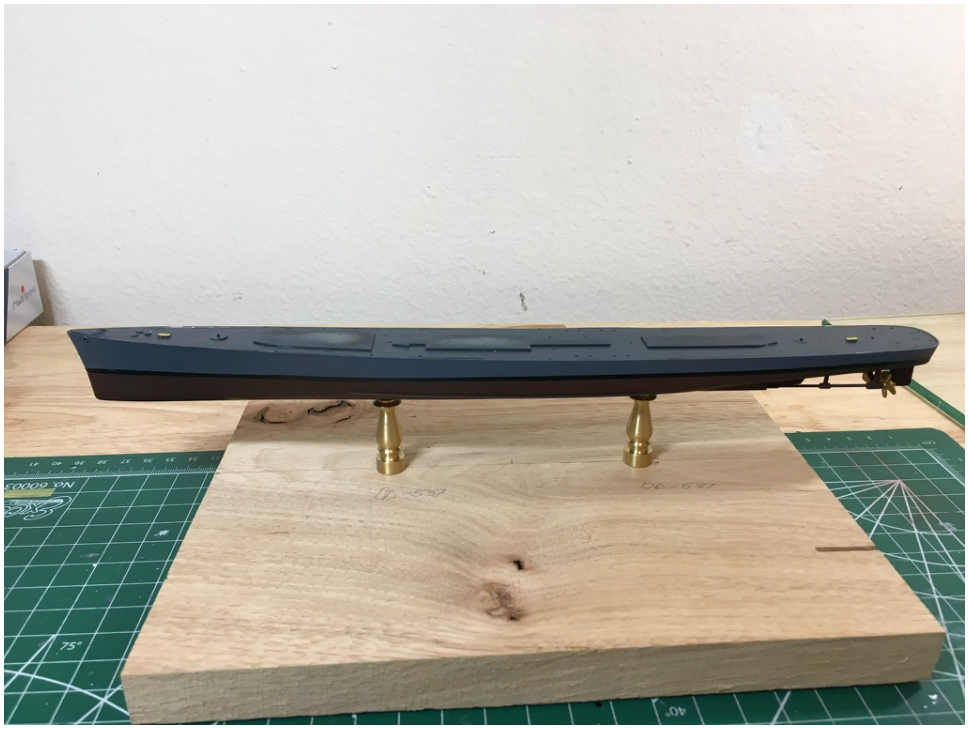

Figure 10. The Painted Hull is on the Working Stand.

Deck House Construction

The first level of the superstructure consists of three separate deck houses. The design of the deck houses is uniformly poor. Most of the parts do not have alignment pins and holes and it is easy to glue them together upside down. I had to set up a jig to keep bulkhead parts vertical and fixed in position while adding the other bulkheads.

Once I had a deck house complete, I carefully scraped off the molded watertight doors and ladders and replaced them with photo-etched brass parts. It was clear whoever created the molds had no idea how doors are installed on a ship. Most of them were hinged incorrectly. On a ship, doors are hung so that wind and waves force the door shut. This means starboard-side doors are hung on the starboard side of the door opening and port-side doors are hung on the port side of the door opening.

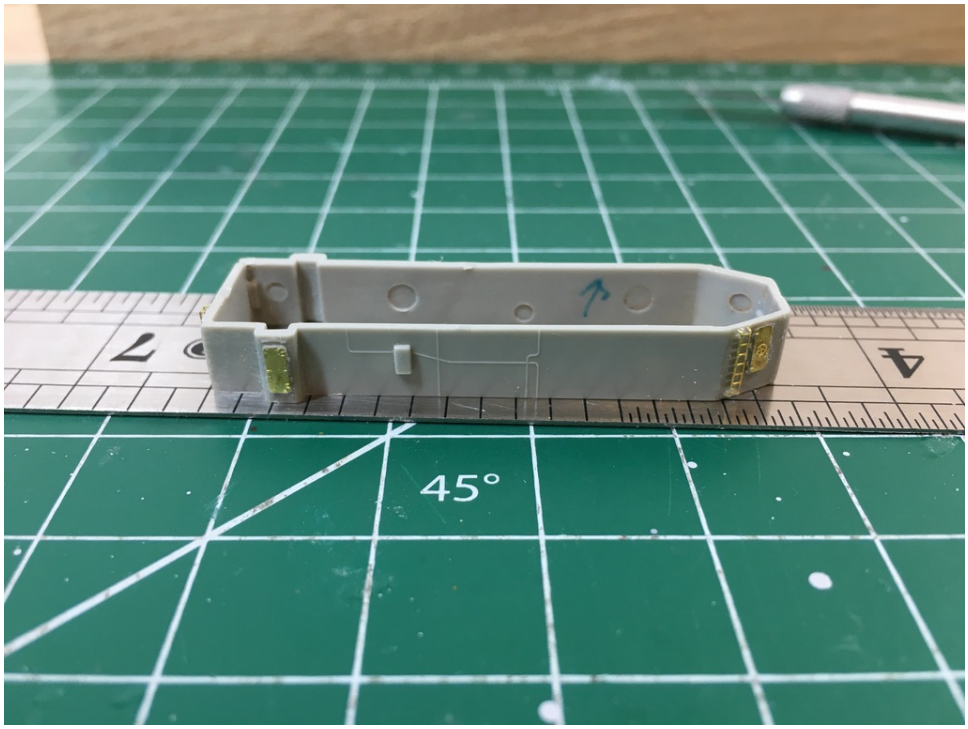

Figure 11. Aft Deck House. Note the Doors and Ladder.

I addressed the inevitable gaps with white glue.

The midships deckhouse deck needed to be modified by removing the mounting blocks for the smokestacks. They were carefully cut out and the foundation sanded smooth. I also removed the molded deck nonskid; it was too thick.

The CIC, bridge deck and pilot house parts were really bad and were replaced with Model Monkey's 3D-printed parts. Since the bridge area is one of the focus points of the model, it needs to as close to perfect as possible.

After removing the CIC/bridge deck and pilot house parts from the 3D printing "raft," I added photo-etched brass watertight doors to them.

Once the deckhouses were complete, I prepared most of the parts for painting by placing them on boards with covered with tape, sticky-side up. The parts were then airbrushed with black primer at about 15 psi. The vertical surfaces were airbrushed with Model Master navy blue at about 15 psi. After the navy blue had cured, I masked the deck edges and gun tubs and airbrushed the horizontal deck surfaces with AK Interactive deck blue.

Figure 12. Deck Houses and Detail Parts Ready for Priming.

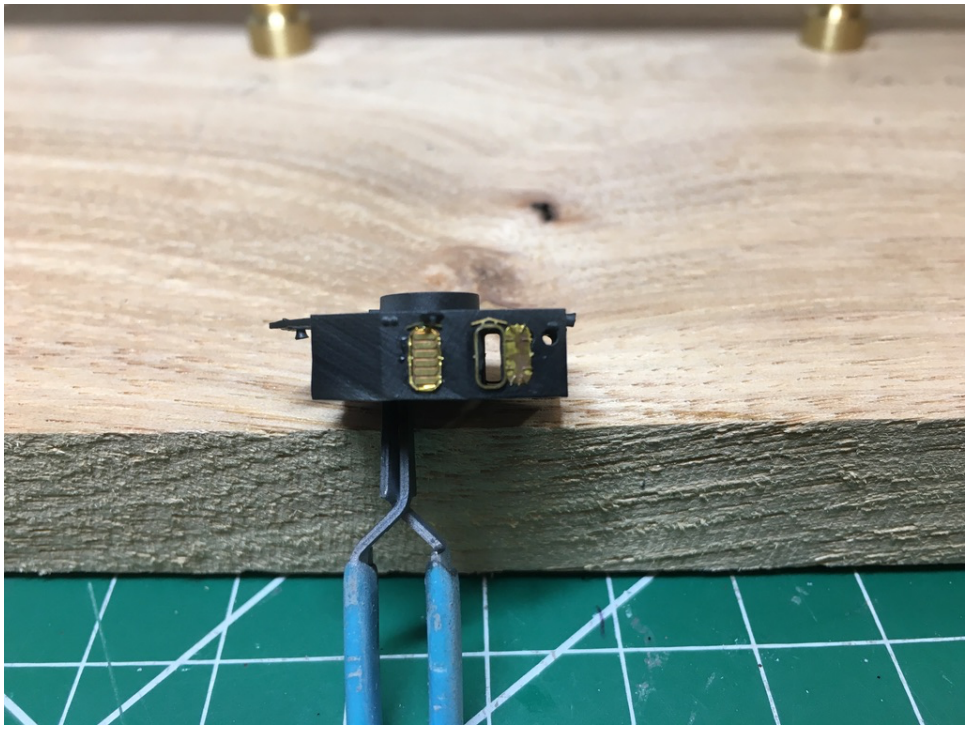

Figure 13. Photo-etched Brass Doors Have Been Added to the Pilot House.

The pilot house was further customized by adding the ship's bell and a HFDF radio loop.

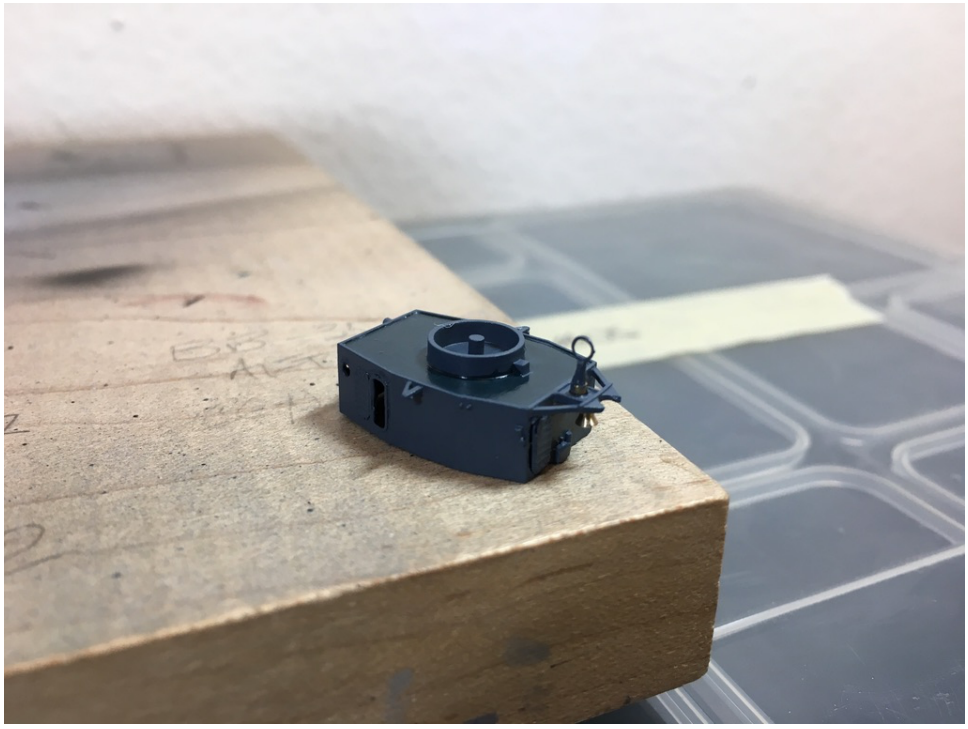

Figure 14. The Pilot House is Ready for Installation.

A dry fit of the superstructure revealed that all of the parts fit reasonably well, but the forward and midships deckhouse needs to be modified to accommodate the Infini brass mast.

In addition, the brace between the pilot house and mast provided in the Infini mast set cannot be used. The mast set is for a round bridge Fletcher which has a higher superstructure and brace than on a square bridge Fletcher like The Sullivans.

The pilot house and the lower portion of the mast were glued into position and then the midships deck house was installed.

The aft 40mm gun superstructure was also glued into position.

The gaps between the deck houses were attacked with white glue and the paint was touched up.

Smokestacks

The kit smokestack parts were not to scale and were replaced with 3D-printed parts from Model Monkey.

The forward stack was detailed with a life rail from the Gold Medal Model's photo-etch fret which goes around the search light platform. Two of the beautiful Black Cat Model's 3D-printed searchlights were installed on the platform. The whistle platform railing and whistle mount were from Gold Medal Model's photo-etched brass Fletcher detail fret. The ship's whistle and siren were scratch built and added to the mount. The funnel grate was also from the Gold Medal Model detail fret.

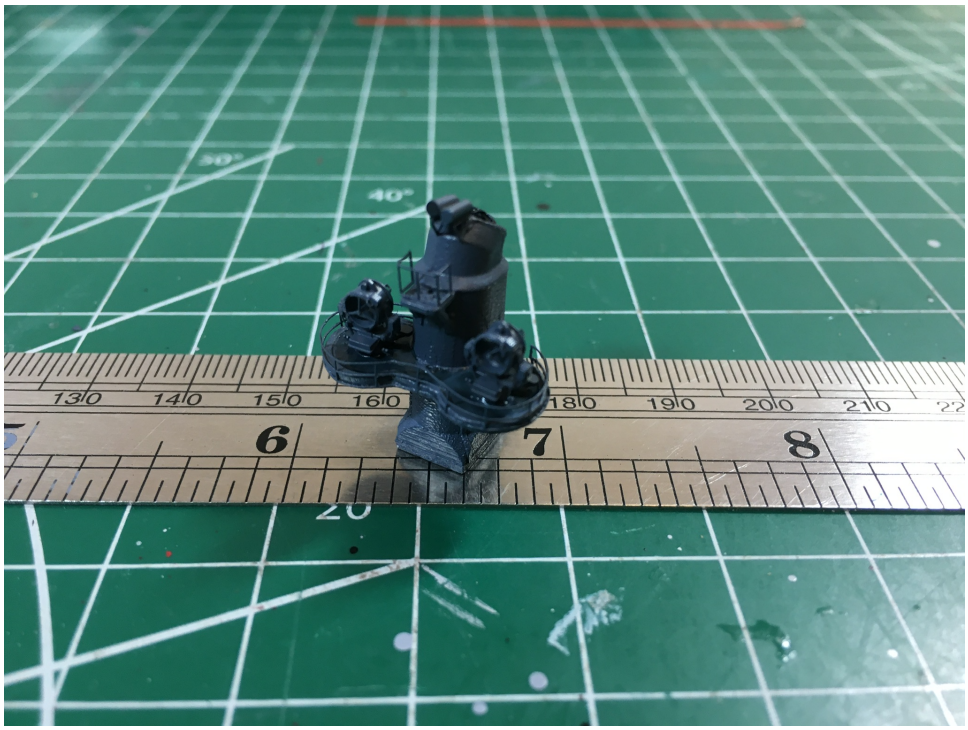

Figure 15. The Forward Stack.

The aft stack was detailed using parts from the Infini Fletcher mast set and with a binnacle and two Mk-51 40mm gun mount directors from Black Cat Models. The funnel grate was from the Gold Medal Model detail fret.

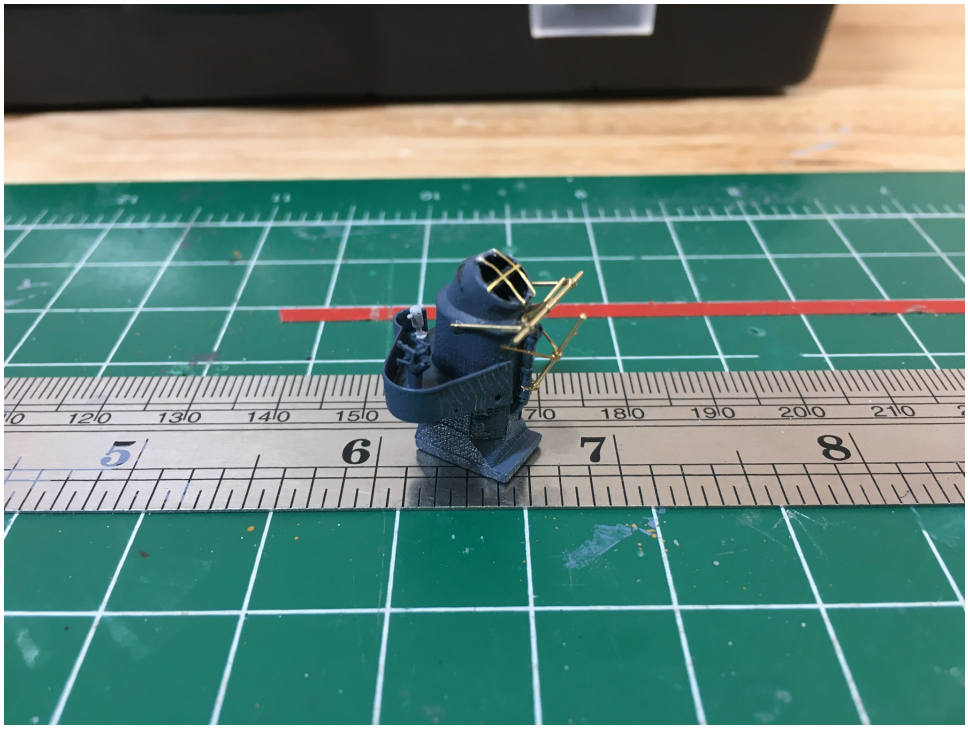

Figure 16. Aft Smokestack Detail Work.

I was asked by a non-modeler why I focused so much on the detail and custom parts, so I built one of the smokestacks from the kit. I didn't try to modify the parts to better fit together. I then took a comparison shot and showed him. He now understands that using custom parts aren't only for excellent detail but are also to provide a better product.

After the detail work was complete, the parts were primed. Once the primer had cured, the navy blue was touched up at 12 psi and with very little paint allowed into the spray. The combination of low pressure and very little paint allows for a very precise paint line. Once the navy blue had cured, final touch up of the paint was completed and the force air blower intake screens were hit with a black highlight wash, so they stand out a bit.

Figure 17. Custom Parts vs. Kit Parts.

Superstructure Detail Work

To simulate the stanchions which supported the bridge wings, I first carefully drilled tiny holes in the bridge wings. Brass rod, .023-inch in diameter, was cut to size and glued into the holes. After the glue was dry, the holes in the bridge wing were sealed and the deck blue paint was touched up. The stanchions were hand-brushed with primer and given a navy blue color coat.

The torpedo directors and pelorus on each side were already part of the 3D-printed bridge deck piece. The torpedo directors were okay, but I didn't like the pelorus, so I replaced them with Black Cat parts. I added a Captain's Chair to each bridge wing and the two Mk-51 directors for the forward twin 40mm gun mounts.

The ladders from the main deck to the O1 level and from the O1 level to the bridge were made from left over Eduard photo-etch parts. Once the ladders were glued in place, the flag bags were installed. The ladders were hand painted with navy blue acrylic.

A life ring was added to each bridge wing.

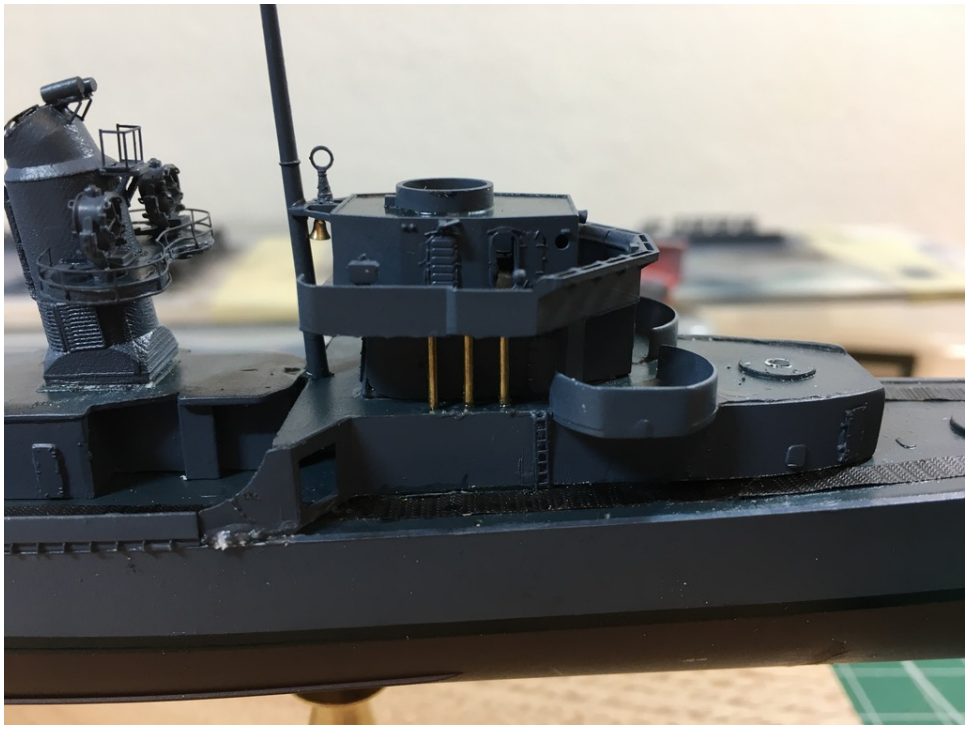

Figure 18. Starboard Bridge Wing Stanchions. Note the Ship's Bell.

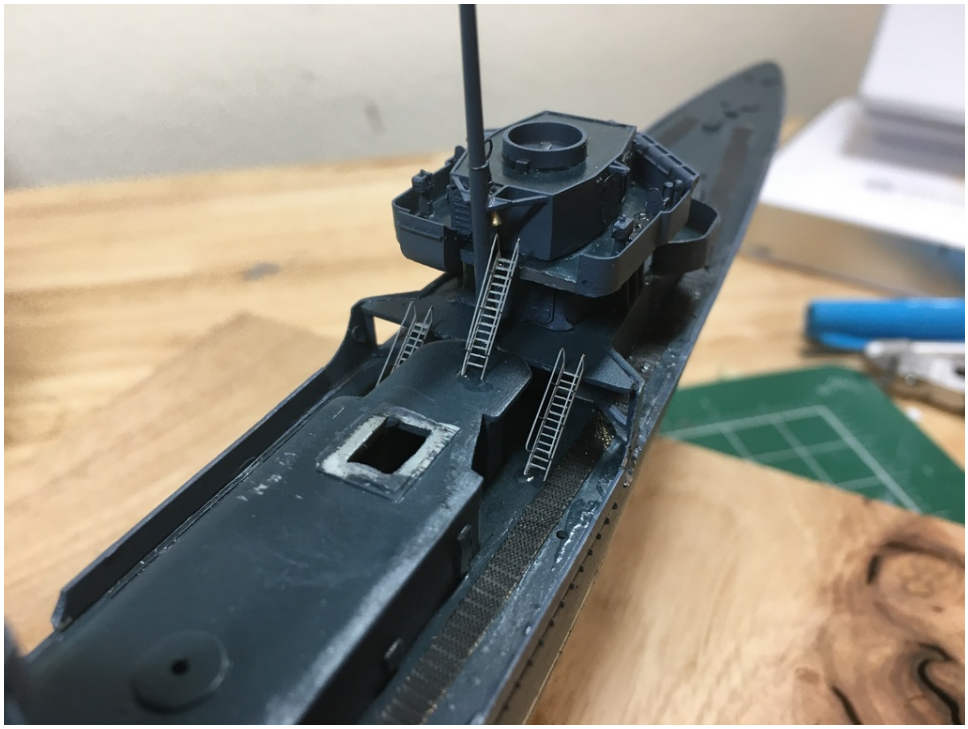

Figure 19. Forward Superstructure Ladders.

The port and starboard running light frames were made from plastic stock and the lights were made from plastic rod. After painting, the completed running lights were glued to the first and second stations on both sides of the superstructure.

I held off adding the 12-inch signal lamps to the bridge because I found they are extremely easy to break on the USS Andrew A. Cunningham model while doing detail work around them. They will be added in final assembly phase.

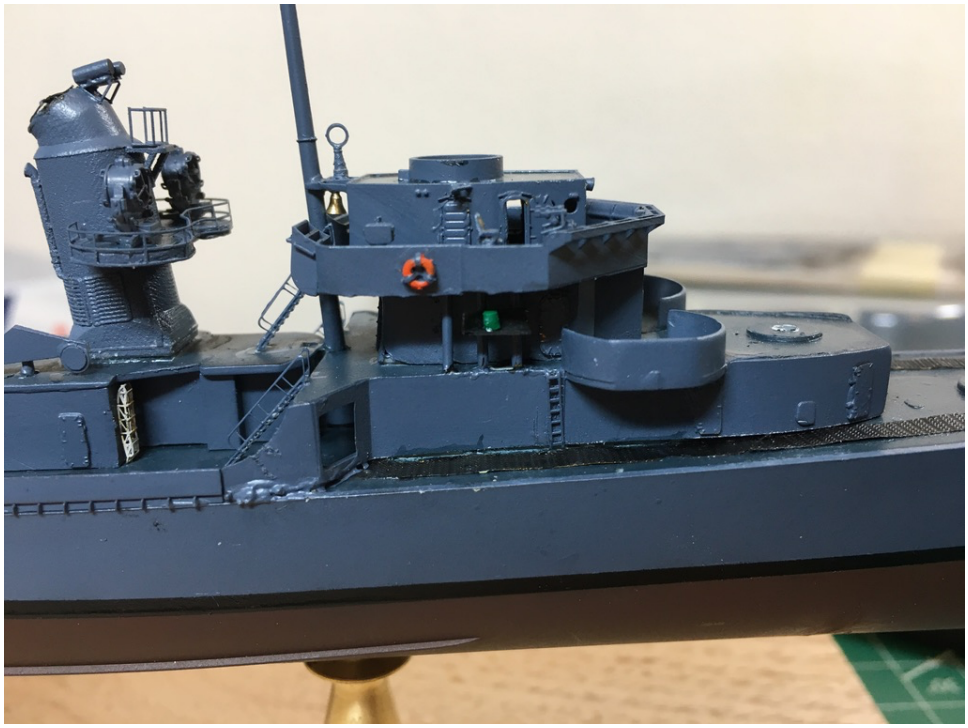

Figure 20. Note the Starboard Running Light.

For the midships and aft superstructure detailing, I started by adding the Mk-51 director and tub for the aft twin 40mm gun mount. Unfortunately, the Idiot building this model used too much pressure trying to ensure a good fit and crushed the life rails on the tub. Fortunately, I was able to exit Idiot Mode and replaced the railing. Once again math rears its head in unusual circumstances.

What length of rail do I need? If the tub is 4.5mm in diameter, then we know:

$$C = \pi D \; or \; C = 3.14259 \times 4.5 \; or \; C = 14.14mm$$

I cut the rail a little bit short to leave a gap for an entry ladder.

I built two stokes litters (for battle casualties) from the Gold Medal Models detail set and glued them to the midships deck house. I also added cable reels to the midships deckhouse, port and starboard, abaft of the aft funnel.

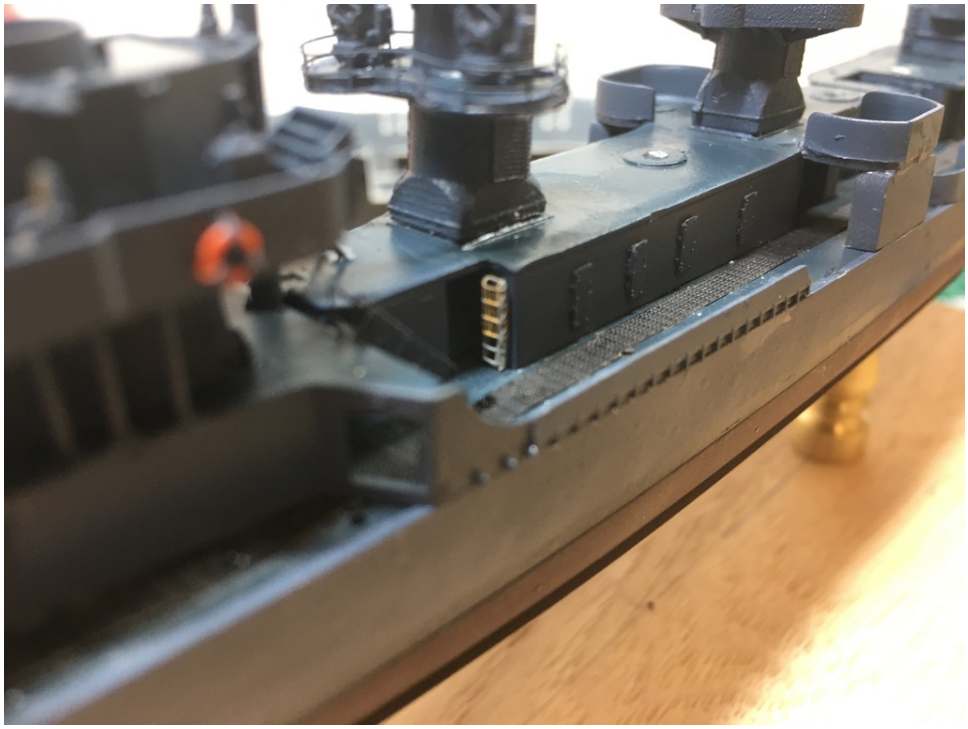

Figure 21. The Port-side Stokes Litter in its Stowed Position.

Life ring rings were added port and starboard to the aft deck house.

A Fletcher class destroyer has two torpedo loading cranes with one for each quintuple torpedo tube launcher. The kit only provided one and was improperly shaped, so I made them from scratch using plastic stock, brass rod, and small brass disks that I punched from a used photo-etched brass fret.

Once the cranes were built, they were primed and airbrushed with navy blue acrylic. Once the paint had cured, the cranes were installed.

The five-inch loading machine was glued down in the aft transverse passageway. "All five-inch gun crews not actually on watch lay aft for loading practice."

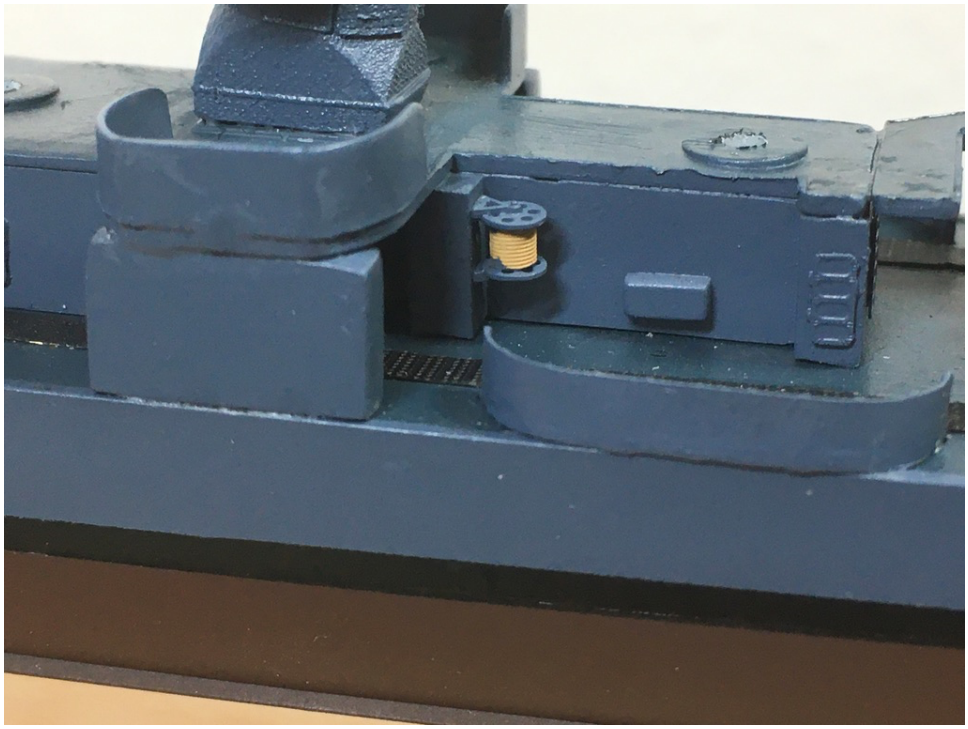

Figure 22. One of the Cable Reels.

The Sullivans carried seven floater nets in their storage baskets. The baskets were from the Tom's Model Works photo-etched brass set. The baskets were bent into shape using a tool manufactured from a wooden dowel. Once the baskets were built, they were primed and airbrushed with navy blue acrylic. After the paint had cured, North Star Model resin floater nets were cut to size and glued in each basket. The floater nets were painted sea gray.

One basket was glued to the roof of the pilot house. Each smokestack had two baskets attached to it with one to port and the other to starboard. The last two baskets will be added to the aft superstructure after the life rails are installed.

Ladders to the smokestack platforms were primed, painted, and glued into position.

The final superstructure detailing step was to add the shamrocks to the forward stack, see Figure 1.

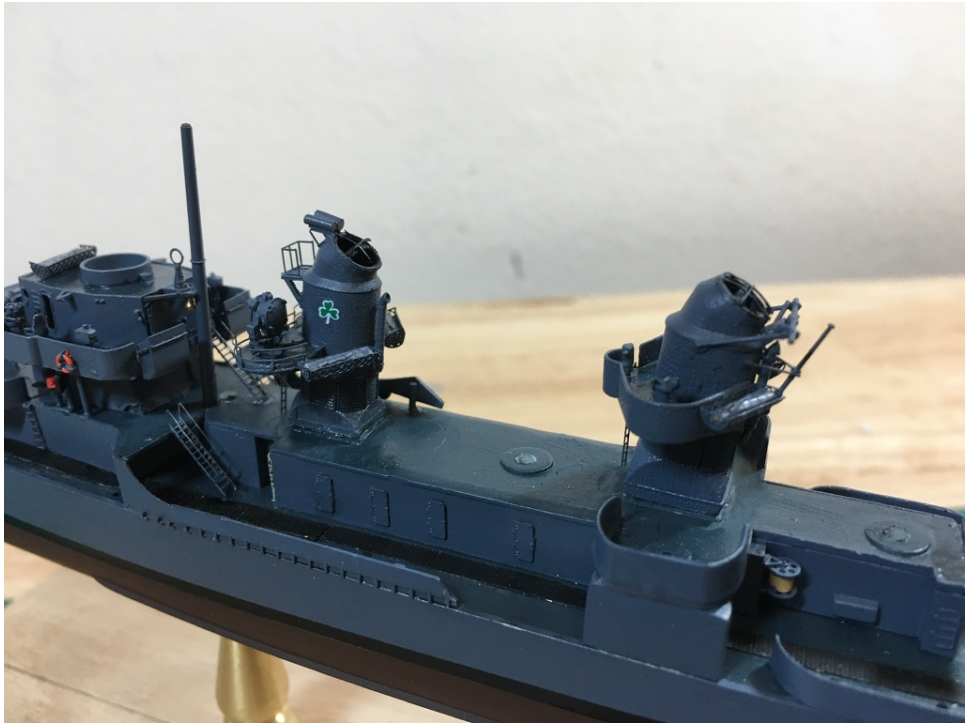

Figure 23. The Lucky Shamrock and Some of the Floater Nets.

Main Deck Detail Work

This phase will add the grounding tackle to the fo'c'sle. The starboard anchor chain stopper and the two hawse pipes had been drilled out previously during hull assembly.

The useless, not to scale, anchor capstan that was molded to the deck was cut off and replaced with a part made from plastic rod. After the capstan was painted, anchor chain was routed from the starboard chain stopper, around the capstan and down the starboard hawse pipe. Tiny drops of super glue were used to tack the chain into position. The port chain was attached to the starboard anchor chain and routed to the port hawse pipe. Once again, the chain was tacked down with super glue.

I used small pieces of wire and parts from the Gold Medal Models detail set to build the anchor brakes. I left the brake wheels as unpainted brass, otherwise they would be quite difficult to see on the model.

I used Black Cat Model anchors from my spare parts bin to replace the kit anchors. The anchors were primed and painted and then glued to the hawse holes.

I added the electric windlass to the midships port deck. The Deck Division used the windless for launching and recovering the whale boats. The starboard boat was handled via a series of pulleys through the forward transverse passageway.

Bitts will be added after the main deck life rails are in place.

Figure 24. The Grounding Tackle, as Built.

On the fantail, I added the chemical smoke generators to complete this phase.

Weapons Installation

The five-inch guns were primed and airbrushed with navy blue during the earlier mass painting exercise. The top of each gun mount was hand-painted with deck blue acrylic and the gun port seals were also hand-painted with glossy brass acrylic. When the paint had cured, the barrels were glued in place. The gun mounts were then glued into position.

The torpedo tube parts, having already painted navy blue were assembled and glued into position.

The five twin 40mm gun mounts were also assembled and glued into place. The forward guns are a bit out of alignment, but I noticed it after the glue had set.

The 20mm ready service lockers were glued down in their respective gun tubs. I won't add the 20mm guns until the final assembly stage. The guns are too easy to break; I broke about 10 of them building the USS Texas model.

I hand painted the frames for the depth charge racks with navy blue acrylic, thus leaving the depth charges black. The roller racks and associated storage racks were glued to the stern.

Figure 25. The Aft 40mm Gun Battery.

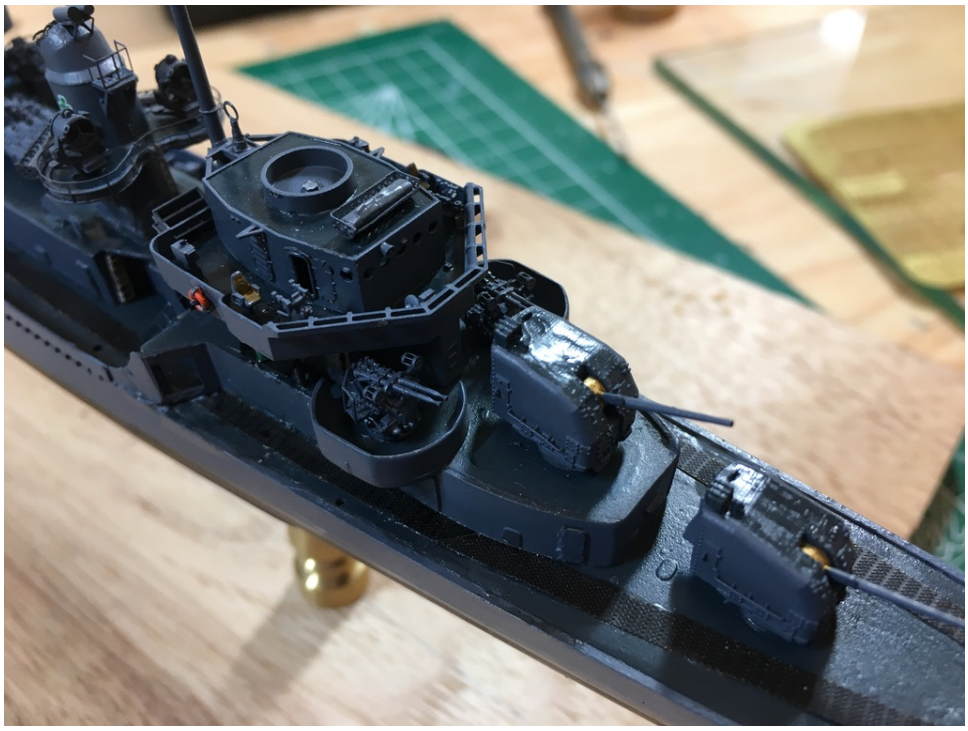

Figure 26. The Forward 40mm Gun Battery. Note the Floater Net on Top of the Pilot House.

The K-guns and associated depth charge storage racks were also hand painted with navy blue acrylic. The storage racks were glued into position and then the loading davits. Each loading davit has a tab that is folded parallel to the deck to give it a better gluing surface. The rope on each davit was painted with tan acrylic. Finally, the K-guns were glued into position.

Figure 27. Depth Charge Racks and Smoke Generators.

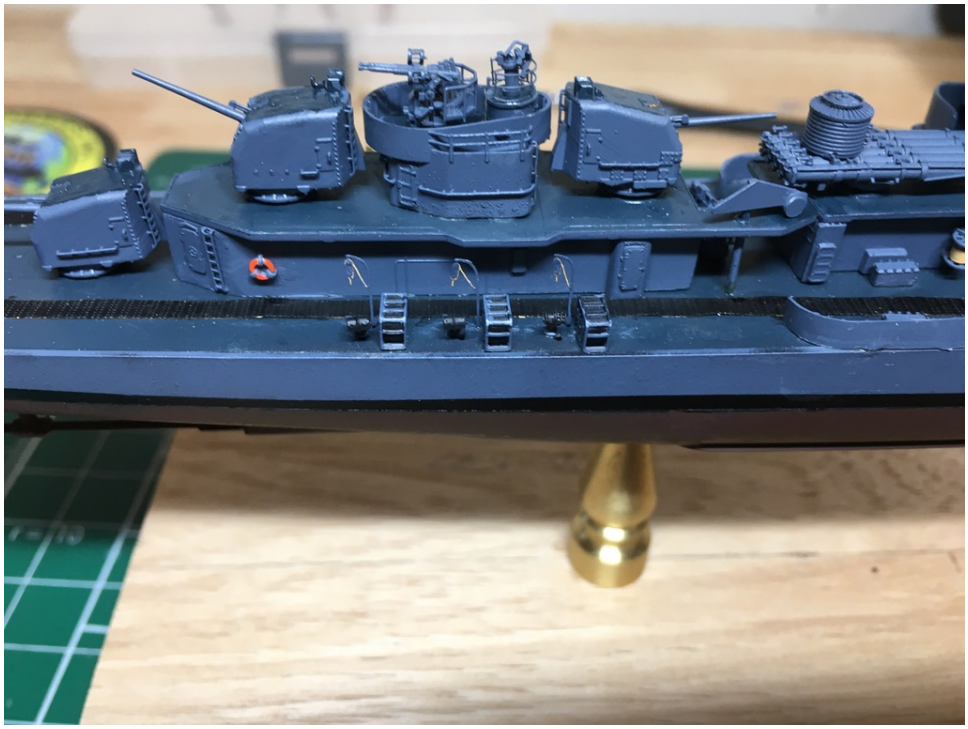

Figure 28. Starboard K-guns, Storage Racks and Loading Davits.

In retrospect, I should've added the K-guns during the final assembly stage. They are quite fragile, and I broke three of them while working in their vicinity. The fire control radar was

added to the five-inch gun director and the assembly was set aside. I will install it after the life rails and signal flag halyards are done.

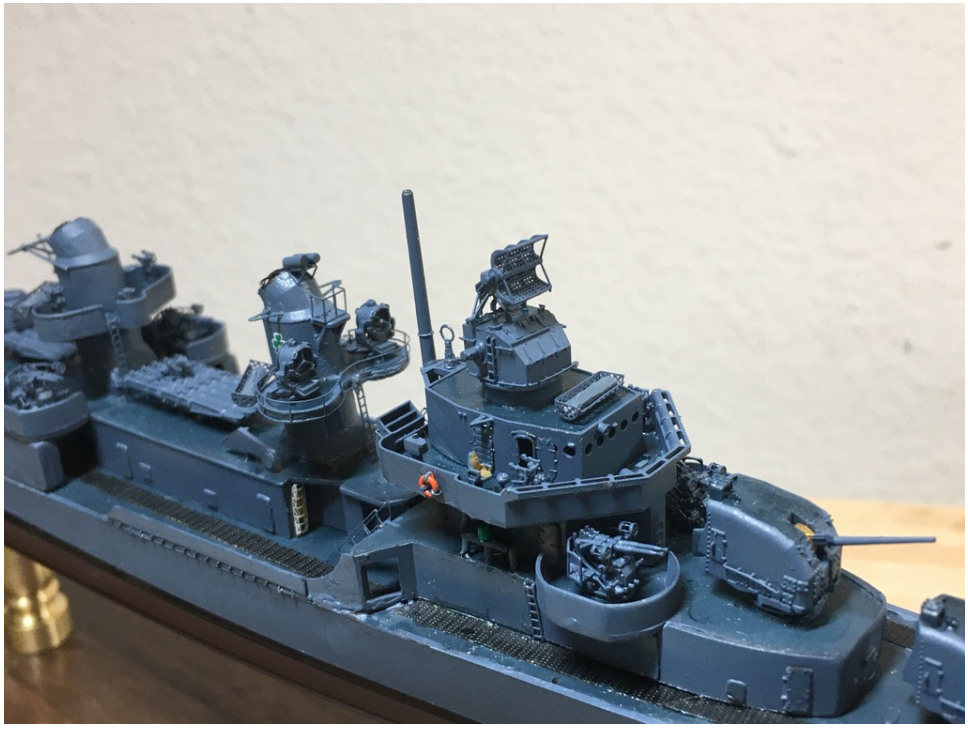

Figure 29. Dry Fit of the Completed 5-inch Gun Director.

Presentation Stand Construction

The presentation stand was made from piece of black walnut. The holes for the mounting screws were carefully marked on the back of the board and the holes drilled out. The board was sanded smooth and hit with a single coat of stain that was quickly wiped off. Once the stain had dried, the stand was hit with four coats of semi-gloss poly urethane varnish.

The model was then transferred from the working stand to the presentation stand. The stand was masked to protect it from any errant drops of paint and or glue.

Mast Build Out

The plan is to completely replace the mast and any associated parts from the kit with the Infini Model's Fletcher Class mast add on kit. There is a lower mast and an upper mast. The lower mast with the radio-direction finding loop and ship's bell were added during the superstructure build out.

Building the upper mast was the most complicated photo-etch and brass work that I have done to date. It was extremely labor intensive, but the results were outstanding.

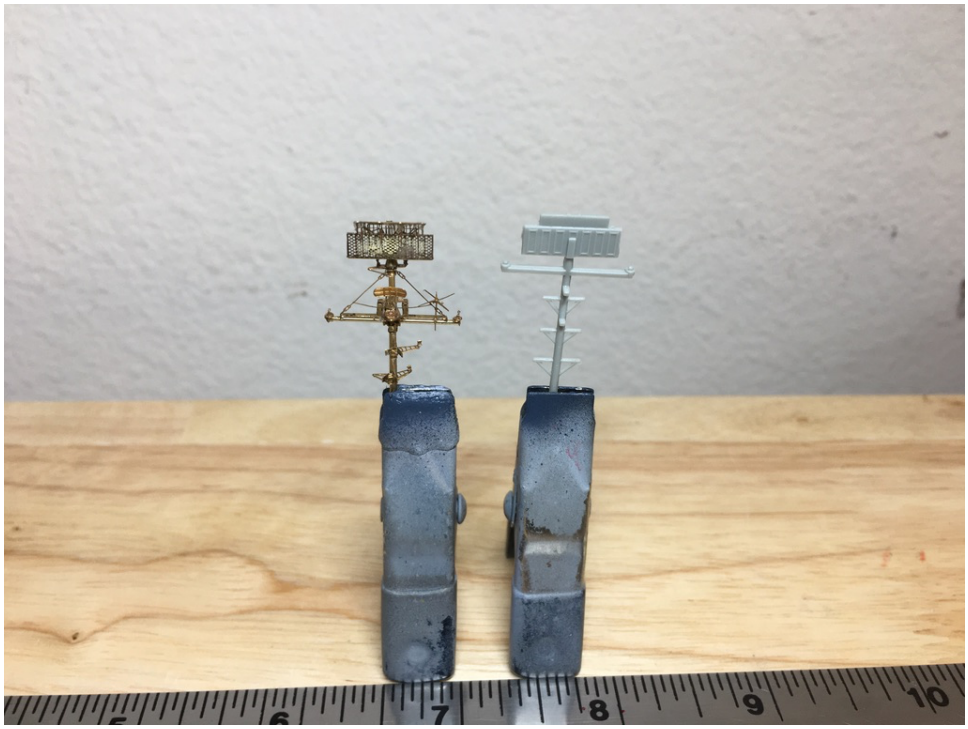

Figure 30. Infini Mast on the Left and Kit Mast on the Right.

Figure 31. Mast, as Built.

Whale Boats and Life Rafts

The davits were primed and painted with navy blue. The davits were glued to the hull, positioned so the whale boats were in their "at sea" or ready for use position. While in port, the davits were turned inwards, and the whale boats did not extend past the edge of the hull. This was done to limit damage to the boats from adjacent ships and/or structures.

Once the davits were in place, I added the photo-etched brass falls and monkey ropes to the davits. Once the falls were in place, I used a wood jig to support the whale boat while it was glued to the falls.

The Sullivans carried four 25-man life rafts. The raft mounts came from the Gold Medal Models photo-etched brass detail set. The mounts were primed and airbrushed with navy blue. The mounts were glued in position and when the glue had set, the rafts were installed.

Rigging

I added a flag halyard to the flag staff on the aft mast. Installing it was a bit difficult due to the crowded space. I should've added the halyard before gluing the aft torpedo tubes in place. The American flag provided with the kit was a 50-star flag, so I replaced it with the correct 48-star flag. Once again, Trumpeter made a mistake with this kit. The flag slid down the halyard before the glue set, so it isn't as high on the flag staff as I would prefer.

I added three signal flag halyards to each flag bag. As a final touch, I added the A for Able flag to the port outboard halyard.

In World War II, this flag would be flying when a ship was making her approach for an underway replenishment. Post-World War II, the ship flies the R for Romeo flag when she makes her approach.

I added an antenna stay to each side of the forward stack to enhance the HF antenna array. These stays were missing from the kit. The HF antenna array was then carefully rigged.

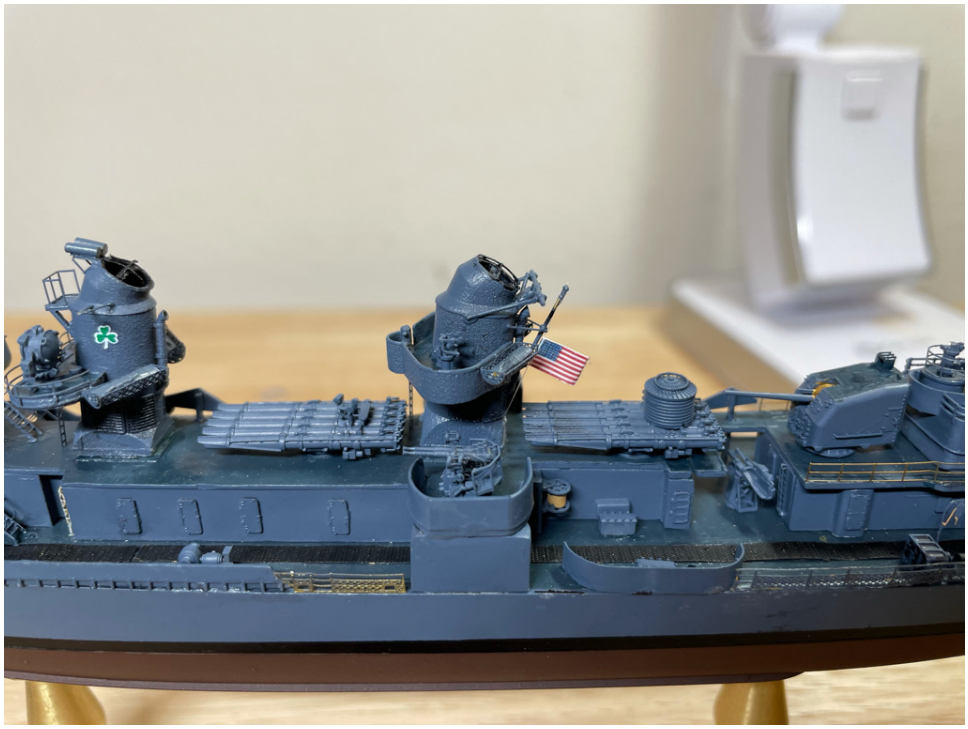

Figure 32. The National Ensign Has Been Added.

Figure 33. The Signal Flag Halyards are Complete.

Figure 34. The HF Antenna Array.

Life Rails

The life rails, still in their brass fret, were airbrushed with black primer at about 12 psi. The primer was followed with a coat of navy blue acrylic.

The plan was to work from top to bottom so I started with the life rail on top of the pilot house. The life rail provided in the Gold Medal Model detail kit didn't fit. This was not too surprising since I replaced the kit's pilot house with a 3D-printed part. I substituted a spare two-bar life rail from my spare photo-etched brass parts stash. Once this life rail was in place, I hand-painted it.

The next step was to add the various life rails on the O-2 level of the superstructure. The instructions and rails provided by the Gold Medal Model detail kit were incorrect for The Sullivans. I replaced them with the correct two bar life rails. Once these were in place, the two aft baskets and floater nets were glued into position.

Finally, I started the main deck life rails installation. I made a semi-major mistake and glued one of the bow life rail pieces to the stern. Fortunately, the stern pieces fit the bow. I doubt the casual observer will notice the slight difference.

After all the rails were in place, I touched up their paint. I found the Gold Medal Model life rails to be difficult to work with, so I had to fight them while fighting the kit.

Final Assembly

The propeller guards were from the Gold Medal Model's detail set. I placed the guards on my builder's mat (it's soft) and gave them a curve by rolling a brass rod over them. The bracing was bent into position and the guards were super glued in place. After the glue had set, they were hand primed and painted.

The five-inch gun director was glued to its ring mount on top of the pilot house.

Mooring line bitts were primed and airbrushed with navy blue acrylic. The bitts were glued into position near each chock.

I painted a 1/350 scale sailor and placed him on the ship. It is up to the reader to find him.

The 20mm guns were added to the fantail and midships gun tubs.

The jack staff and aft flag staff were made from brass rod and glued into position.

As a final step, I added a signal lamp to each bridge wing.

With the model complete in all respects, I carefully dusted the model using my air brush at about 15 psi and gave it a coat of semi-gloss clear acrylic. The clear coat protects the decals and gives all the surfaces the proper oil-based paint sheen.

The display case was ordered from our friends at JD Hobbies in San Pedro, CA. The name plate was ordered from our local trophy shop.

Conclusions

Overall, the project came out well. I managed to overcome most of the Trumpeter kit defects. Having said that, I wouldn't build this kit again; it is just too poorly designed and molded. Many of the parts do not fit together well. I ended up fighting this kit more than I expected; it caused more problems than some of the resin kits.

The photo-etch detail sets and the 3D-printed parts really made the model. An otherwise mediocre kit can shine with the right third party parts and enough patience.

If you compare Figure 1 with Figure 35, I think I did a good job of modeling the actual ship.

I did a poor job with the non-skid. I should've glued it down and airbrushed it with deck blue. The non-skid would still add detail, but not standout as much.

The decision to install the 20mm guns as a last step was a good one; I avoided breaking any of them. I will do the same with the K-guns next time I'm building a ship so equipped.

Figure 35. As-built Profile.

Figure 36. As-built Oblique.

Ship's Characteristics

Namesake: The five Sullivan brothers

Class and Type: Fletcher-class Destroyer (also known as a Square Bridge Fletcher)

Builder: Bethlehem Steel San Francisco

Laid down: October 10, 1942

Launched: April 4, 1943

Commissioned: September 30, 1943

Decommissioned: January 10, 1946

Recommissioned: July 6, 1951

Decommissioned: January 7, 1965

Stricken: December 1, 1974

Fate: Preserved as a memorial on June 21, 1977 and berthed at Buffalo, New York.

Call Sign:  November India Delta Uniform or NIDU

Motto: "We Stick Together"

<u>General Characteristics (As Built)</u>

Displacement: 2,050 long tons

Length: 376 feet 6 inches

Beam: 39 feet 8 inches

Draft: 17 feet 9 inches

Installed power: Four oil-fired Babcock & Wilcox boilers producing 600 psi superheated steam at 850^{o}F for 60,000 SHP

Propulsion: Two Westinghouse geared steam turbines turning two shafts

Speed: 38 Knots

Range: 6,500 Nautical Miles at 15 knots

Complement: 336 officers and men

Armament: Five 5-inch/38 caliber gun mounts
Five twin 40mm gun mounts
Seven 20mm cannon
Two quintuple 21 inch torpedo tubes
Six K-gun depth charge throwers
Two depth charge racks

Ship's History

The ship was named in honor of the five Sullivan brothers (George, Francis, Joseph, Madison, and Albert) aged 20 to 27 who lost their lives when their ship, USS Juneau, was sunk by a Japanese submarine during the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal on 13 November 1942. This was the greatest military loss by any one American family during World War II. She was also the first ship commissioned in the Navy that honored more than one person.

The Sullivans was originally laid down as *Putnam* on 10 October 1942, at San Francisco by the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corporation. She was initially renamed *Sullivan* until President Franklin Roosevelt changed the name to *The Sullivans* to clarify that the name honored all five Sullivan brothers. The name was made official on 6 February 1943, and the ship was launched 4 April 1943. The ship was sponsored by Mrs. Thomas F. Sullivan, the mother of the five Sullivan brothers. *The Sullivans* was commissioned on 30 September 1943, with Commander Kenneth M. Gentry in command

World War II Service

Following a shakedown cruise, *The Sullivans* got underway with sister ships USS *Dortch* (DD-670) and USS *Gatling* (DD-671) on 23 December 1943. The group arrived at Pearl Harbor five days later. During training operations in Hawaiian waters, the ship was assigned to Destroyer Squadron (DesRon 52). On 16 January 1944, she steamed out of Pearl Harbor with Task Group 58.2 (TG 58.2) bound for the Marshall Islands. En route to Kwajalein Atoll the group was joined by Battleship Division 9 (BatDiv 9). Two days later, as the American warships neared their target, picket destroyers were sent ahead to protect the main force from the enemy. On 24 January, TG 58.2 arrived at the dawn launching point for air strikes against Roi. For two days, *The Sullivans* screened USS *Essex* (CV-9), USS *Intrepid* (CV-11), and USS *Cabot* (CVL-28) as they launched nearly continuous aerial raids. Thereafter, the destroyer continued her operations to the north and northwest of Roi and Namur Islands throughout the Battle of Kwajalein until 4 February, when TG 58.2 retired to Majuro to refuel and replenish.

Underway at noon on the 12th, *The Sullivans* screened Task Group 58.2, as part of Task Force 58's raid on Truk. The same carriers — *Essex*, *Intrepid*, and *Cabot* — whose planes had attacked Roi and Namur steamed in the van now headed for the Japanese fortress-base in the Central Pacific. From the time the group arrived at its launching point on 16 February, the carriers launched what seemed to be nearly continuous air strikes against Truk. "No enemy opposition of any kind was encountered," wrote *The Sullivans*' commander, "indicating that the initial attacks came as a complete surprise."

While the enemy may have been slow to react at the outset, they soon struck back – torpedoing *Intrepid* at 00:10 on the 17th. The carrier slowed to 20 knots (37 km/h) and lost steering control. *The Sullivans*, USS *Owen* (DD-536), and USS *Stembel* (DD-644) stood by the stricken carrier and escorted her to Majuro for repairs. Reaching Majuro on 21 February, the destroyer soon sailed on to Hawaii, arriving at Pearl Harbor on 4 March for drydocking and upkeep.

Underway again on the 22nd, *The Sullivans* covered the sortie of Task Groups 58.2, 58.9, and 50.15 from Majuro, bound for the Palaus, Yap, and Woleai Islands. On the evening of the 29th, while the American warships were approaching the target area, enemy aircraft attacked but were driven off by the anti-aircraft fire from the ships. The next day, *The Sullivans* screened the carriers during air strikes and that evening helped to beat off a Japanese air attack.

After returning to Majuro for replenishment, the warship screened TG 58.2 during air strikes on Hollandia (currently known as Jayapura), Tanahmerah, Wakde, and Aitape to support amphibious operations on New Guinea. Late in April, *The Sullivans* participated in support of air strikes on the Japanese base at Truk. On the 29th during one of these raids, the Japanese retaliated with a low-level air attack. American radar picked up four Japanese planes 16 miles away, coming in fast at altitudes varying from 10 to 500 feet. When the planes came within range, *The Sullivans* opened fire with one 40-millimeter twin mount and all five 5-inch guns. Two aircraft splashed into the sea due to the firing of the American ships, and one crossing ahead of *The Sullivans* was taken under fire and crashed in flames off her port beam.

The Sullivans arrived off the northwest coast of Ponape on the afternoon of 1 May and provided cover for the battleships led by USS *Iowa* (BB-61) which bombarded the island. From the disengaged side of the screen, *The Sullivans* fired 18 rounds from extreme range at Tumu Point. She then noted three beached Japanese landing barges and shifted her fire to them. However, she received the general cease-fire order shortly thereafter.

During the task unit's retirement, *The Sullivans* refueled from USS *Yorktown* (CV-10) and arrived at Majuro on 4 May. Ten days later, TG 58.2 sortied again, bound for Marcus and Wake Islands. Launching the first raid at 08:00 on the 19th, the American carriers kept up nearly continuous air strikes with no enemy interruptions for three days. En route back to Majuro, The *Sullivans* and her sister destroyers conducted a thorough but unsuccessful search for a suspected submarine.

On 6 June, *The Sullivans* got underway again, bound for Saipan, Tinian, and Guam to screen carriers in conducting air strikes. On occasion while in the screen, *The Sullivans'* radar picked up

enemy snoopers around the periphery of the formation – and before dawn at 03:15 on the 12th, TG 58.2 shot down one in flames.

The second day's strikes against Saipan took place on the 13th to support the American landings there. Assigned to the duty of communication-linking station between task forces, *The Sullivans* remained within visual sighting distance of both TG's 58.1 and 58.2 during the day. That day, she picked up 31 Japanese merchant seamen after their ship had been sunk offshore and transferred these prisoners to flagship USS *Indianapolis* (CA-35).

On 19 June 1944, during the first day of the Battle of the Philippine Sea, Japanese aircraft attacked the task group. *The Sullivans* picked up a plane visually at a range of less than five miles. The Japanese Judy diver bombers attacked from 23,000 feet and pressed home their attacks. One, taken under fire by *The Sullivans*, took tracer fire from the ship's 20- and 40-millimeter batteries and, moments later, crashed just short of the horizon. American air attacks against Pagan Island, made without enemy retaliation, topped off the Saipan-Tinian-Guam strikes; and *The Sullivans* proceeded with TG 58.2 to Eniwetok for upkeep.

Underway on 30 June, *The Sullivans* resumed work in the screen of carriers launching air strikes to support operations against Saipan and Tinian. During this action, *The Sullivans* served as fighter-direction ship for TU 58.2.4.

On Independence Day, *The Sullivans* joined Bombardment Unit One (TU 58.2.4) to conduct a shore bombardment of airfields, shore batteries, and other installations on the west coast of Iwo Jima. The heavy ships in the group opened fire at 15:00, and smoke and dust soon obscured targets along the western shore of the island, making spotting difficult. *The Sullivans*, second ship in a column of destroyers, opened fire at 15:48 on planes parked on the southern airstrip. After three ranging salvos, the ship commenced hitting twin-engine Betty bombers parked in revetments along the strip. Five planes blew up, and eight other planes were probably damaged by shrapnel and burning gasoline. Minutes later, an enemy ship resembling an LST came under *The Sullivans*' gunfire and caught fire astern. While USS *Miller* (DD-535) closed to complete the destruction of the enemy vessel, *The Sullivans* and the remainder of the bombardment unit retired and rejoined TG 58.2.

From 7 to 22 July, TG 58.2 operated south and west of the Marianas, conducting daily air strikes on Guam and Rota Islands before returning to Garapan Anchorage, Saipan, for replenishment. Underway at dawn on the 23d, *The Sullivans* accompanied the task group as it sped towards the Palau Islands for air strikes on the 26th and 27th. She joined TG 58.4 for temporary duty on 30 July through 6 August and then she joined TG 58.7, the heavy bombardment group, and operated with them until 11 August, when the group returned to Eniwetok for replenishment.

Early in September, as the Navy prepared to take the Palaus, *The Sullivans* supported neutralizing air strikes against Japanese air bases in the Philippines. At dawn on the 7th, she began radar picket duty for TG 38.2 and continued the task through the strikes of the 9th and 10th. From 18:00 on 12 September, the ships noted an increase in air activity – observing many bogies that merely orbited the formations as snoopers. The carriers conducted further raids on the central Philippines on the 13th and 14th and then shifted course to the north to

subject Manila to air attacks commencing on the 21st. Three days later, American planes again hit the central Philippines.

Returning to Tanapag Harbor, Saipan, at dawn on the 28th, *The Sullivans* went alongside USS *Massachusetts* (BB-59) for ammunition, provisions, and routine upkeep. However, the cross-swells in the anchorage swept *The Sullivans* hard against the battleship's hull, damaging the destroyer's hull and superstructure. Following brief antisubmarine patrol duty, she proceeded to Ulithi on 1 October.

While undergoing tender repairs alongside USS *Dixie* (AD-14), *The Sullivans* formed part of a nest of destroyers blown away from the tender during a heavy storm that lashed the anchorage. *(Author's Note: Dixie was still in commission when I joined USS Truxtun, and I was aboard her several times).*

The Sullivans drifted free downwind and got up steam "in a hurry." However, she collided with USS *Uhlmann* (DD-687). Many small boats were being tossed about, and *The Sullivans* rescued four men from USS *Stockham* (DD-683)'s gig before it disappeared beneath the waves. As the storm abated on the 4th, the warship returned to Ulithi to complete the abbreviated tender overhaul alongside *Dixie*.

At 16:15 on 6 October, *The Sullivans* sortied with the carriers and protected them during raids against targets on Formosa and the Ryukyus. On the evening of the 12th, as the planes returned to the carriers, radar spotted the first of many Japanese aircraft coming down from the north. For the next six hours, approximately 50 to 60 Japanese aircraft subjected the American task force to continuous air attacks. Nearly 45 minutes after sunset, The *Sullivans* sighted a "Betty," coming in low on the starboard side, and took it under fire. During the next 15 minutes, the formation to which *The Sullivans* was attached shot down three planes; between 18:56 and 19:54, the destroyer herself took five planes under fire. Varying speed between 18 and 29 knots, the formation undertook eight emergency maneuvers. Again, and again, timely turns and the great volume of gunfire thrown up by the ships repulsed the enemy air attacks.

The second phase of the attack began at 21:05 on the 12th and continued through 02:35 on the 13th. The Japanese increased the use of "window" to jam American radar transmissions while their flares lit up the evening with ghostly light. The formation made smoke whenever enemy flare-dropping planes approached, creating an eerie haze effect which helped baffle the enemy pilots. Meanwhile, *The Sullivans* and the other ships in formation executed 38 simultaneous turn movements at speeds between 22 and 25 knots (46 km/h) as their guns kept up a steady fire to repel the attackers.

The next day, the carriers again launched successful strikes on Formosa. During the ensuing night retirement, the formation again came under attack by Japanese torpedo-carrying Bettys who struck home this time and damaged USS *Canberra* (CA-70). *The Sullivans* then helped to protect the damaged cruiser. On the 14th, "Betty" torpedo bombers scored against USS *Houston* (CL-81). *The Sullivans* soon joined the screen which guarded the two battle-battered cruisers – nicknamed "CripDiv 1" — as they retired toward Ulithi.

Things progressed well until the 16th, when the Japanese mounted a heavy air attack to attempt to finish off cruisers. *Houston* reeled under the impact of a second hit astern, and *The Sullivans* opened fire on the Frances bomber which had made the attack and splashed the Japanese plane. *The Sullivans* and USS *Stephen Potter* (DD-538) then took a second Frances under fire and knocked it down off the bow of USS *Santa Fe* (CL-60).

The Sullivans rescued 118 *Houston* men and kept them on board until the 18th, when she transferred them to USS *Boston* (CA-69). While the damaged cruisers were making their way to Ulithi, a Japanese surface force attempted to close the formation before TF 38 intervened to drive them back. *The Sullivans* transferred salvage gear to *Houston* and helped with the ship's many wounded. For his part in directing the destroyer's rescue and salvage attempts, Comdr. Ralph J. Baum received his first Silver Star.

On 20 October, *The Sullivans* joined TG 38.2 for scheduled air strikes on the central Philippines in support of the Leyte landings. At dawn of the 24th, reconnaissance located a Japanese surface force south of Mindoro, and the American carriers launched air strikes all day against the enemy warships. That morning, a Japanese air attack developed, and *The Sullivans* downed an Oscar fighter plane.

By 25 October, enemy forces were sighted coming down from the north. TF 34, including *The Sullivans*, was formed and headed north, following the carrier groups in TF 38. At dawn on the 25th, the carriers launched air strikes to harass the Japanese surface units, now some 60 miles north. At 11:00, TF 34 reversed course, topped-off the destroyers with fuel, and formed fast striking group TG 34.5, with *Iowa*, USS *New Jersey* (BB-62), three light cruisers, *The Sullivans*, and seven other destroyers. The American force missed the Japanese by three hours but ran across a straggler and reported sinking a *Takao*-class cruiser. Japanese records fail to confirm the claim.

After sweeping south along the coast of Samar hunting for enemy cripples, *The Sullivans* and other units of TG 34.5 reported back to TG 38.2. The destroyer then remained in the Philippine area, screening the fast carriers, and standing by on plane guard duties, through mid-November. At dusk on the 19th, during one of the many air attacks fought off by *The Sullivans*, the destroyer damaged a Betty by gunfire and watched it disappear over the horizon, smoking but stubbornly remaining airborne. Six days later, she had better luck when her guns set a Japanese plane afire and splashed it into the sea. Two days later, her task group returned to Ulithi.

The destroyer undertook training exercises from 8 to 11 December before rejoining TG 38.2 to screen its warships during air strikes on Manila and southern Luzon beginning on 14 December. On the 17th, running low on fuel, *The Sullivans* commenced refueling but, with the weather worsening minute by minute, she broke off the operation. Typhoon Cobra swept through the Fleet, with the wind clocked at an estimated 115 knots on the morning of 18 December. Three destroyers were sunk, and several ships damaged by the winds and waves. *The Sullivans*, her lucky shamrock painted on her funnel, emerged from the typhoon undamaged and, on the 20th began searching for men lost overboard from other ships. The lingering bad weather resulted in cancellation of air strikes, and *The Sullivans* retired to Ulithi on Christmas Eve.

After a brief run to Manus and back, escorting *Iowa*, *The Sullivans* sortied from Ulithi on 30 December to screen TG 38.2's air strikes on Formosa in support of the American landings on Luzon. Heavy seas forced a three-day postponement of a high-speed thrust toward the target originally planned for the night of 6 January 1945. During the evening of the 9th, the task force passed through the Bashi Channel and entered the South China Sea. Three days later, carrier planes from TG 38.2 swept over Saigon and Camranh Bay, Indochina, hammering at whatever enemy merchantmen they found.

Soon after the conclusion of the air strikes, a bombardment group, TG 34.5, was formed to go after possible cripples and sink them by surface gunfire. Accordingly, two battleships, two heavy cruisers, three light cruisers, and 15 destroyers raced into Camranh Bay but found it devoid of Japanese shipping. Throughout the day, however, carrier pilots had better luck and enjoyed a veritable field day with coastal *marus*. During subsequent air strikes on Hainan Island, Hong Kong, and Formosa, *The Sullivans* served on radar picket duty 10 miles ahead of the task group.

A brief respite for upkeep at Ulithi in late January preceded the ship's deployment with TG 58.2, covering the carriers as they launched devastating air strikes against the Japanese homeland itself, hitting Tokyo and other targets on Honshū on 16 and 17 February. From the 18th through the 21st, American carrier-based air power struck at Japanese positions contesting the landings on Iwo Jima. More strikes were scheduled for Tokyo four days later, but bad weather forced their cancellation. Retiring from the area, TF 58 fueled and commenced a high-speed run at Okinawa at noon on 28 February. Later that day, *The Sullivans* sighted and destroyed a drifting mine. At dawn on 1 March, Hellcats, Avengers, and Helldivers attacked Japanese positions on Okinawa. The ships of the task force encountered no enemy opposition from sea or sky and soon retired towards Ulithi.

The Sullivans sortied 12 days later, bound for Kyushu and southern Honshū to support the invasion of Okinawa. Once again screening for TG 58.2, *The Sullivans* stood by as the carriers launched air strikes on 14 March. On 20 March, *The Sullivans* fueled from USS *Enterprise* (CV-6) at 11:52, clearing the carrier's side five minutes later when a kamikaze alert sent the ships scurrying.

At 14:39, *The Sullivans* commenced maneuvering to go alongside *Enterprise* again – this time to pick up a part for her FD radar antenna. Soon, however, another enemy air attack scattered the ships. As a line had not yet been thrown across to the carrier, *The Sullivans* bent on speed and cleared her as other ships in the task group opened fire on the attackers. A Japanese plane came through the antiaircraft fire and crashed into USS *Halsey Powell* (DD-686) astern as that destroyer was fueling alongside USS *Hancock* (CV-19). The stricken destroyer lost steering control and started to veer across the big carrier's bow, and only rapid and radical maneuvering on *Hancock*'s part averted a collision.

The Sullivans soon closed *Halsey Powell* to render emergency assistance. She slowed to a stop 11 minutes later and lowered her motor whaleboat to transfer her medical officer and a pharmacist's mate to *Halsey Powell*, when another kamikaze came out of the skies, apparently bent on crashing into *The Sullivans*. At 16:10, the destroyer's radar picked up the Zeke on its

approach; and, as soon as the motor whaler was clear of the water, *The Sullivans* leapt ahead with all engines at flank speed.

Bringing right full rudder, *The Sullivans* maneuvered radically while her 20- and 40-millimeter guns sent streams of shells at the Zeke, which passed 100 feet) over the masthead and escaped. Meanwhile, *Halsey Powell* managed to achieve a steady course at five knots; and, with *The Sullivans*, she retired toward Ulithi. However, their troubles were not yet over. At 10:46 on the following day, 21 March, *The Sullivans* picked up a plane, closing from 15 miles. Visually identified as a twin-engine Frances bomber, the aircraft was taken under fire at 10,000 yards by *The Sullivans*' 5-inch battery. *Halsey Powell* joined in too; and, within a few moments, the Frances crashed into the sea about 3,000 yards (abeam of *The Sullivans*. At 12:50, a combat air patrol (CAP) Hellcat from *Yorktown*, under direction by *Halsey Powell*, splashed another Frances. At 13:20, a CAP Hellcat from *Intrepid*, directed by *The Sullivans*, downed a Nick or Dinah.

On 25 March, *The Sullivans* and *Halsey Powell* arrived at Ulithi, the former for upkeep prior to training exercises and the latter for battle repairs.

The warship next rendezvoused with TF 58 off Okinawa and guarded the carriers supporting the landings on the island. While operating on radar picket duty on the 15th, the ship came under enemy air attack, but downed one plane and emerged unscathed. She continued conducting radar picket patrols for the task group, ranging some 12 to 25 miles out from the main body of the force. On the afternoon of 29 April, she commenced fueling from USS *Bunker Hill* (CV-17), but a kamikaze alert interrupted the replenishment, forcing *The Sullivans* to break away from the carrier's side. During the ensuing action, USS *Hazelwood* (DD-531) and USS *Haggard* (DD-555) were both crashed by Kamikazes but survived.

Kamikazes continued to plague the ships of TG 58.3 as they supported the troops fighting ashore on Okinawa. Everything from landing craft to battleships were targeted. On the morning of 11 May, a kamikaze crashed into *Bunker Hill*. *The Sullivans* promptly closed the carrier to render assistance and picked up 166 men forced over the side by the fires that at one point ravaged the ship. After transferring them to ships in TG 50.8 and replenishing her fuel bunkers, she helped to screen TG 58.3 during air strikes on Kyushu.

In a morning air attack three days later, *Enterprise* was hit by a kamikaze. Four enemy planes were shot down in the melee – one by *The Sullivans* in what proved to be her last combat action during World War II.

The Sullivans anchored at San Pedro Bay, Leyte Gulf, on 1 June for recreation and upkeep. She departed Leyte on the 20th, bound, via Eniwetok and Pearl Harbor, for the west coast. The destroyer arrived at Mare Island, California on 9 July and, two days later, commenced her overhaul. She thus missed the final fleet activity that closed the war.

Meanwhile, since the return of peace greatly reduced the Navy's need for warships, *The Sullivans* was decommissioned at San Diego on 10 January 1946 – soon after her overhaul was completed – and she was placed in the Pacific Reserve Fleet.