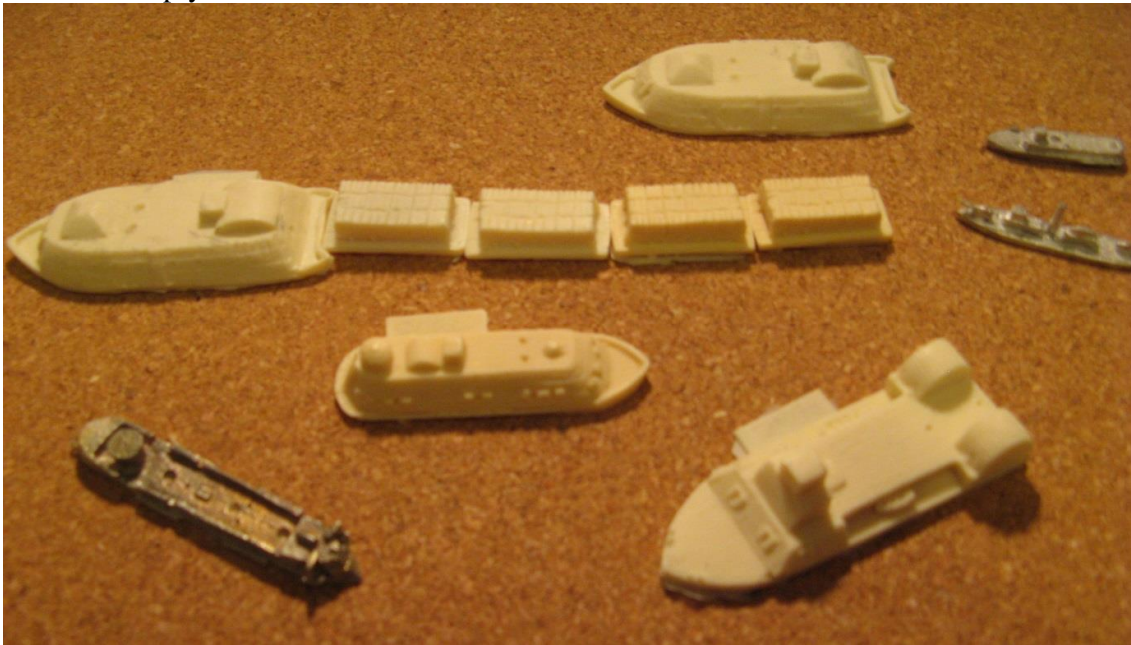


# Stone Mountain Miniatures: Houston's Ships Miniatures 1/1200th Scale American Civil War Naval Vessels

Review by Jonathan Aird

I was recently fortunate enough to be sent some examples of the Houston's Ships Miniatures ACW naval range, which is produced by Stone Mountain Miniatures. They are a mixture of resin or metal hulls, with metal details such as masts and ship's boats. Generally, it is the larger vessels that are in resin. The resin models have a small tag at water level which is part of the manufacturing process and this will need to be removed before painting can start.

Since a picture speaks a thousand words, a couple are shown below. In the first, you can see (working left to right and front to back) CSS Stonewall, USS Tuscumbia, USS Cairo (or one of her six other sister ships), USS Benton with four cotton barges in tow, CSS Hampton, USS Benton again, and CSS Little Rebel. It really shows off the range of ship sizes that were used ó Benton simply towers over Little Rebel !

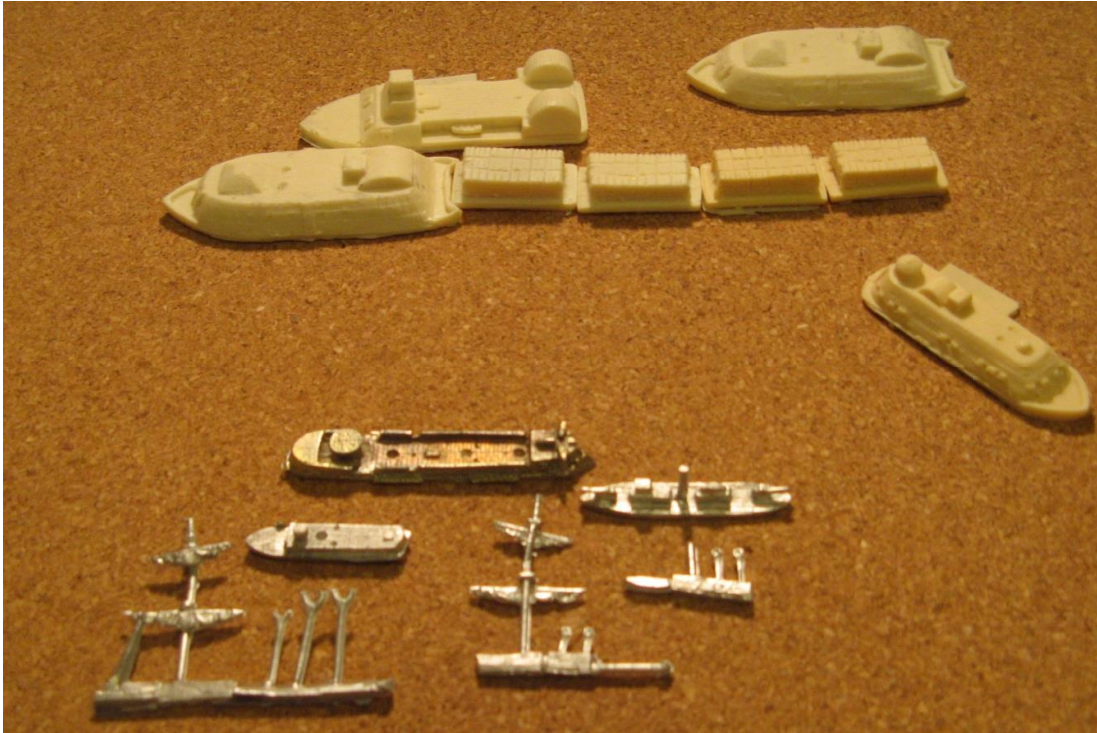


CSS Stonewall is supplied with white metal fitting, such as the mast. With a 43mm long hull and an 8mm beam, it's perfectly in scale (when allowance is made for the bowsprit). Neither CSS Hampton nor CSS Little Rebel got into service and I can find few details on either of them ó their overall dimensions however seem about right. Hampton was one of a proposed class of 100 vessels ó now there's a what if? scenario to explore!

USS Benton has long been one of my favourite American Civil War vessels ó it's such a brute of a beast. The proportions in this model are fine, and there's a nice level of detail in the metal cladding and the gunports. It comes with metal smokestacks and ship's boats. USS Tuscumbia is, according to my references, a little off in the stern ó it should extend a little further behind the enclosed paddle wheels. Otherwise, it's another nice model of, perhaps, the worst ship built by the United States. Poorly designed, poorly constructed and a liability in combat ó it's the perfect command for a bold captain who is unaware of the problems. I'm looking forward to gaming with this one!

USS Cairo, by contrast, was one of the best designs of heavily armed and armoured of the class of seven vessels were very active. The model is again spot on and the engraving of the armour is good of you'd need several of these!

In this photograph, you can see the same ships in a different order! Again working left to right and front to back there are CSS Little Rebel, CSS Hampton, CSS Stonewall, USS Cairo (or one of her six other sister ships), USS Benton with four cotton barges in tow, USS Tuscumbia, USS Benton again. At the front are the white metal detail parts of masts, ships boats etc.



The cotton barges are worthy of note as being, I think, unique to this range in this scale. They can be used as decoration to a river scene of which will then become obstacles to travel if cut loose, they were also used by the Confederates as improvised fire ships. It occurred to me that they'd also double up as stores sledges for 15mm Arctic explorers!

The ships are supplied in packs of 2-8 vessels, depending on the size of the vessels. Most are packs of 3 and they retail for \$7.50 per pack, which seems very reasonable. In detail, the ships are as good as Navwar of those with more extensive detailing kits I'd rate a little higher. It is a large range that is well worth having a look at if you are looking to get into ACW naval gaming of or just if you need to expand your current fleets.

**Web site:**

[http://www.historicalminiatures.com/houstons\\_ships.html](http://www.historicalminiatures.com/houstons_ships.html)