



BATTLESHIP SCUTTLEBUTT

January 2022

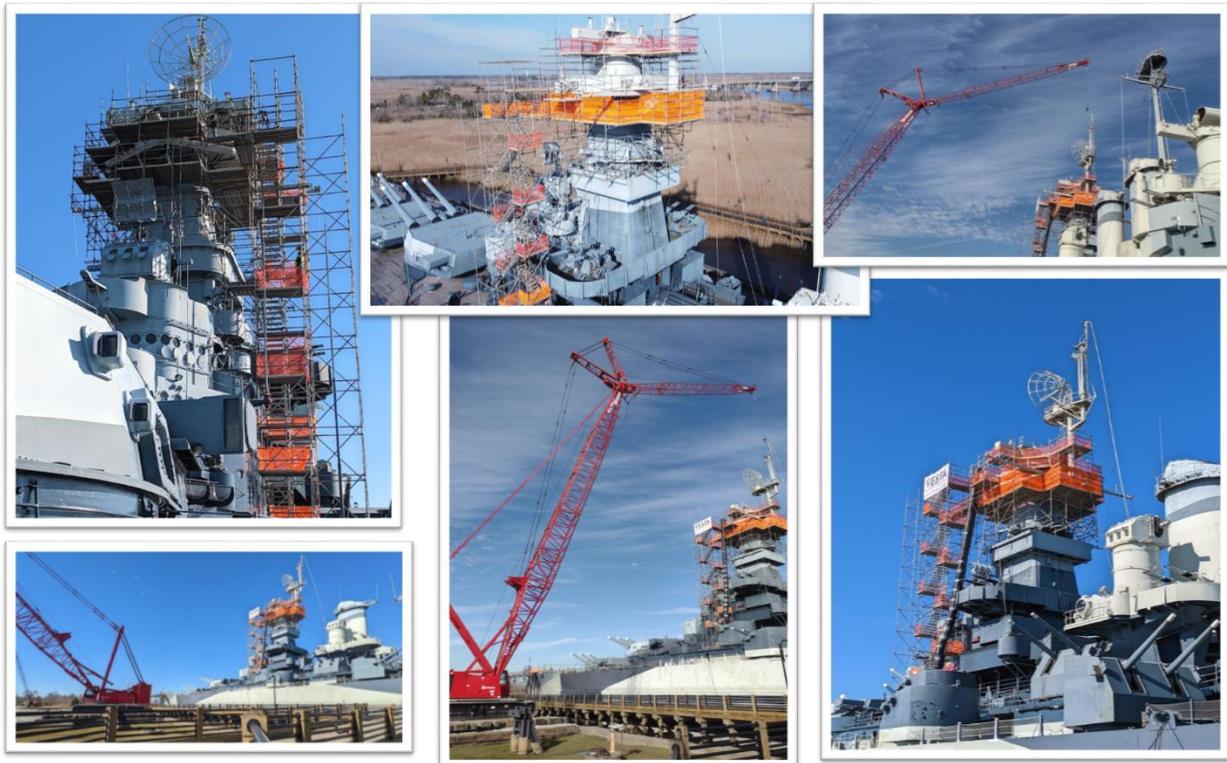
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What's Happening on the Showboat?

Mast Repair Effort Progresses – With scaffolding in place and a massive crane assembled, the effort to remove the foremast for repairs and refurbishment continues to move forward. The repair work is necessary after record-breaking rainfall and catastrophic sustained winds associated with Hurricanes Florence and Michael accelerated normal rates of corrosion on the Battleship's exterior steel structures.

During periods when work is being done aloft, it may be necessary to restrict access to topside decks below the area, as well as areas within the swing of the crane.



Water, Water Everywhere – In early January visitors to the Battleship were faced with a challenge that is occurring more frequently – they were forced to navigate a flooded parking lot and Battleship Park. The flooding was the result of the combination of a new moon and its corresponding high tide and strong winds that pushed water up the Cape Fear River and onto the Battleship’s Eagles Island home.



January 4, 2022 - Water covers the parking lot and Battleship Park.

In an interview with WHQR News, Battleship Executive Director Terry Bragg noted that the flooding experienced in early January was not an uncommon event, but it was more severe than some of the events of the past.

"The flood, as I see the data, is now tied for the ninth-worst flood as measured at the downtown Wilmington gauge," Bragg said.



Faced with increasing flood and storm impacts, the Battleship has developed a plan to help mitigate the challenges the higher waters bring – the Living with Water project.

The project’s approach will restore more than 800 feet of the berth with an intertidal living shoreline, create about two acres of estuarine wetlands in the most chronically flooded parking lot area, elevate the remainder of the parking lot, and deliver educational messages on coastal flooding issues and solutions.

Living with Water has received \$2.3 million in state and federal grants but needs additional funding to protect the Battleship’s property and ensure safe visitor access to Battleship Memorial.

Please consider donating to the Generations Campaign to support Living with Water.

DONATE
Living with Water

This Month in Showboat History

January 1942 – With the attack on Pearl Harbor still fresh in their minds, the Showboat crew spent most of the month conducting intensive main and secondary battery exercises while operating in the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico – preparations necessary for their inevitable entry into the war.

Every
Thursday is



**BATTLESHIP
THURSDAY**

Show your support.
Wear your
“Showboat” gear.

January 29-30, 1944 – USS *North Carolina*, together with the other ships and aircraft assigned to the newly established Task Force 58, participated in the bombardment and invasion of the Marshall Islands. In the nearly 24 hours *North Carolina* participated in the operation, the small Kwajalein islands of Roi and Namur were pummeled with a total of 360 rounds of 16-inch and 2,353 rounds of 5-inch ammunition fired from the Showboat.

"On the 29th and 30th we bombarded Roi-Namur all night before the invasion. We started bombing before sunset and set a few fires and used the fires as reference points to cover the island." – Harold Smith, Firecontrolman 1/c.

Destruction of the Japanese airfields, along with the aircraft and ships that had been operating from the group of small islands, made way for the 4th Marine Division and the Army's 7th Infantry Division to make successful landings in early February.

North Carolina was also responsible for the sinking of the Japanese freighter *Eiko Maru* in Kwajalein's lagoon shortly before the bombardment of Roi and Namur commenced. The sinking yielded some valuable intelligence when the Navy later recovered, from the wreckage, up-to-date navigational charts providing safe approaches to several Japanese-occupied islands in the Pacific.

January 1945 – Operations in the South China Sea were the focus of Admiral "Bull" Halsey and Task Force 38 during **January of 1945**. Looking to neutralize the Japanese Navy that had been largely unchallenged in the region for the preceding three years, Halsey also believed he could aid General Douglas MacArthur's effort on the west coast of the Philippine island of Luzon by drawing the Japanese to defend against the task force rather than against MacArthur's landing forces.

On **January 7**, Admiral Halsey broadcast the following message to the units assigned to the task force as they began their operations in the South China Sea:

"Luzon is now a bloody battleground. The enemy is now fighting to the death to stop our expeditionary forces and troops. Many of our ships have been hit hard in the past two days. Every undestroyed enemy plane is potential death to many of our comrades. This is the time for great effort. Give the best and God bless you".

Though weather hampered many of the plans Halsey had envisioned, the Americans did have limited success off the west coast of Luzon with the task force being responsible for the sinking of a Japanese cruiser, 44 merchant ships, including 12 oil tankers, and the destruction of over 100 Japanese aircraft.



CAPT Colclough (l) and
RADM Fahrion (r).

January 28, 1945 – With the nearly month-long operations in the South China Sea behind them, Captain Oswald Colclough becomes the seventh Commanding Officer of USS *North Carolina* relieving newly-promoted Rear Admiral Frank Fahrion.

Fahrion eventually went on to attain the rank of Admiral. On January 16, 1982, exactly 12 years after the admiral's death, the guided-missile frigate USS *Fahrion* (FFG 22) was commissioned.



USS *Fahrion* (FFG 22)



January 30, 1944 - Smoke rises from the fires on Roi-Namur caused by air and naval bombardment.



Did You Know?

January 1, 1947, was the final time USS *North Carolina* rang in a new year as a commissioned Navy ship. In keeping with tradition, the Showboat's navigator, Lt. Cmdr. R.L. Lowell posted the following New Year's Day entry to the Deck Log:

*"The Ship moored as before, the BB 55 with thirteen wires, but hardly alive.
Receiving all services from the dock, water and steam, but time from our clock.
US Naval Shipyard berth 19 with pier K on our port beam.
Ships present are ATLANTIC and yard crafts.
SOPA is on this vessel, the flag flying aft.
Gunnery and Security watch two on deck,
Trying to celebrate the New Year by heck,
Standing the watch are Beckman and Barnes,
The boys are up spinning yarns.
Here we are with skeleton crew, looked for snow, only got dew.
We wish a Happy New Year to you all,
I have to stop now to make a call."*

There's a Flag on the Play – Signal flags played an important role in the conduct of naval operations during World War II. And despite the current availability of radio, satellite, and other digital communications, they still do. Communicating by using signal flag hoists provided the ability to pass information short distances in virtual silence, decreasing the opportunity for audible or electronic signals to be intercepted.

Every letter of the alphabet, along with the numbers 0 through 9, is represented by a flag. Numbers also have a pennant assigned. Additionally, there are pennants designating a variety of other events or conditions such as course, speed, formation, etc. Each flag and pennant might also have a separate meaning if it were to be flying by itself.

The signal flags that are flown today from the Showboat, the ship's call sign NIBK, would not necessarily have been the flags flying while the ship was at sea. Instead, a combination of flags flying on the halyards might indicate a course, speed, or formation change, or a single flag or pennant flying might indicate some event occurring on or around the ship.

For example: If the lead (guide) ship of a column formation wants to change the formation's course to 045° by turning to starboard, it would fly the flags/pennants Corpen (turn), Starboard, Zero, Four, Five (Figure 1). In addition, the lead ship would be flying the "Golf" (G) flag indicating it was the guide ship of the formation.

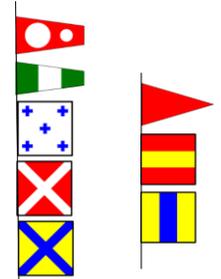
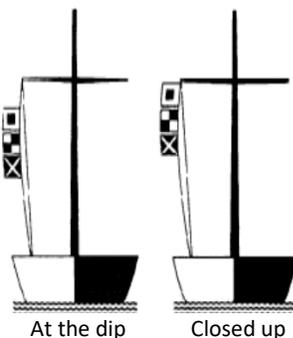


Figure 1 Figure 2

If a formation speed change to 18 knots was desired, the guide ship would fly the Speed, One, Eight flags (Figure 2) to signal the rest of the formation.

Executing the order (the change of formation or speed) among several ships is accomplished by a series of steps to ensure the orders are received, understood, and then executed at the proper time.

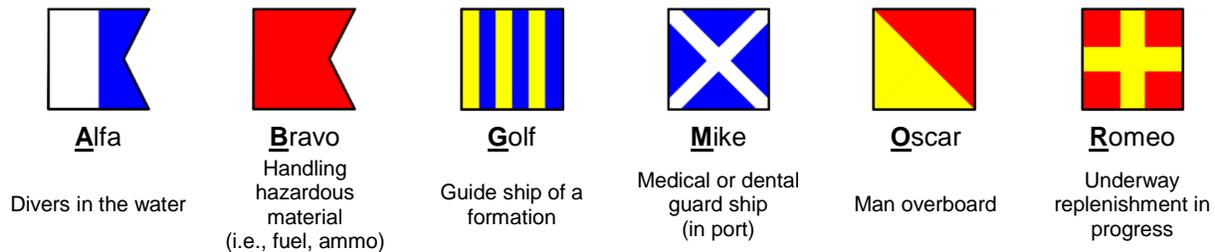


First, the guide of the formation hoists the flags three-fourths of the way up, or "at the dip"; each ship in the formation, in turn, acknowledges the message by hoisting the same message "at the dip".

Once all ships have acknowledged the signal, the guide ship hoists the signal flags the remainder of the way up the halyard to the yardarm (the hoist is said to be "closed up"). The other ships in the formation mimic the action by "closing up" their hoists.

When all ships have their flag hoists "closed up" it indicates to the guide ship that they all understand the order and are prepared to execute it. The guide then executes the order by "hauling down" the flag hoist to the deck.

Examples of single flag messages include:



Talk Like a Sailor

SOPA (Senior Officer Present Afloat) – When more than one U.S. Navy ship is in the same port, the most senior officer aboard the ships is designated SOPA. The SOPA is responsible for various administrative functions associated with the ships present in the port and is also responsible to civilian authorities for the ships and their crews. The ship in which the SOPA is embarked flies the “starboard” pennant while in port.



Skivvy waver/Skivvy hanger – Nickname given to sailors working on the Signal Bridge because of the way signal flags mimic laundry being waved (semaphore) or hanged (flag hoists).

Support the Showboat

Friends Keep Shopping – Battleship enthusiasts participating in the AmazonSmile program generated a \$115.73 donation to the Friends during the third quarter of 2021. The amount represents 0.5% of just over \$23,000 in eligible purchases made by those who have designated Friends of the Battleship North Carolina as the charitable organization to receive the donations through AmazonSmile.

If you already shop on Amazon, it’s easy to sign up to participate – and at no cost to you. Find out how by clicking the button below.



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