



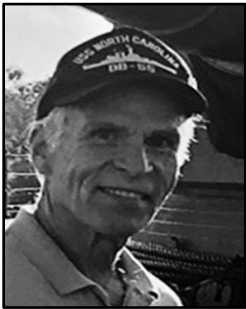
SCUTTLEBUTT

February 2022

[Visit Our Website](#)

[DONATE](#)

From the Chairman



The USS *North Carolina* Battleship Commission met for its first meeting of 2022 on January 28. Meeting via Zoom, the commissioners received an update on operations and plans from Battleship Executive Director Terry Bragg. Additionally, Michael Zalob, Chairman of the Friends of the Battleship

had the opportunity to brief commissioners about recent Friends activities.

Following is the presentation Zalob made to the commissioners:

Good Afternoon.

This past year the Friends celebrated the 60th anniversary of the Battleship's presence in Wilmington. We had several successful endeavors over the seven-month celebration including our tour guides conducting over 900 of our special main deck, "6 for 60" tours, at a discounted rate of \$6 for the 60-minute tour. We also realized an increase in our membership over the year including a significant increase in our higher level membership categories.

Our continued support of the ship was highlighted through a \$1250 grant to fund the restoration and restocking of the Ship's Store #1 and a \$2000

purchase of vacuums and additional supplies for the Maintenance Department's Wednesday volunteer group.

We also supported ship visitation by purchasing and distributing hundreds of masks. Our 15 cent per mask investment for a \$12 to \$14 tour is a worthwhile return on investment that we intend to continue as long as needed.

We expect this coming year to be even better as we branch out and expand our programming.

Our calendar for 2022 will again have special weekends offering the "6 for 60" tour in addition to "Raise the Flag" opportunities.



Last week we started another training course for 12 new tour guides and ambassadors.

To encourage higher level memberships, additional benefits such as specialized personal tours off the regular tour route and a private VIP cocktail party at the July 4th fireworks are being considered.

To expand our footprint in the community we intend to have a Friends' booth at at least five local events including the Azalea Festival, the Southport Spring

Festival, Riverfest, and festivals in Leland and Belville.

Another exciting venture is the development of an internship program with the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. We believe this three credit course will start in the fall. I would like to express my

appreciation to Commissioner Rubye Braye for her significant assistance in establishing this opportunity.

This is a snapshot of what's coming. I encourage you to continue reading the *Scuttlebutt* we send to you each month to stay informed.

What's Happening on the Showboat

Mast Repair Effort Progresses



(Above) The Showboat's foremast was removed in three separate lifts. Once workers prepared the structures for removal, the crane swung in to first remove the upper section of the mast, followed by the SK-2 air search radar dish, and then the final section of the foremast severed at the platform just aft of the Forward Main Battery Director (Spot 1).

(Below) Once the three sections were removed, they were moved into areas where they are being repaired and refurbished.



Photos by Alan Cradick – For more of Alan's images, [click here](#).

This Month in Showboat History



February 15, 1943 – While moored at Dumbea Bay, Noumea, comedian and actor Joe E. Brown entertained the crew of the Showboat from a makeshift stage on the fantail. Brown was a popular actor in the 20s and 30s, and became known for his tireless travels to entertain the troops, at his own expense, in the South Pacific, New Zealand, and Australia, as well as in the Caribbean and Alaska.

Of note – Joe E. Brown played the part of Cap'n Andy Hawks in the 1951 film adaptation of the musical *Show Boat*.

February 12-22, 1944 – As part of Task Group 58.3, USS *North Carolina* joined the carriers *Bunker Hill* (CV 17), *Monterey* (CV 26), and *Cowpens* (CVL 25), the battleships *Iowa* (BB 61), *Massachusetts* (BB 59), *South Dakota* (BB 57), and *Alabama* (BB 60), along with more than a dozen other cruisers and destroyers in support of operations against Truk, Guam, Tinian, and Saipan.

February 10, 1945 – USS *North Carolina* got underway from Ulithi Lagoon assigned as part of Admiral Mitscher's Task Force 58. The battle force was made up of nearly 120 combat-ready ships, including 16 carriers, 8 battleships, 15 cruisers, 77 destroyers, and over 1,000 aircraft.

In mid-February, the task force was divided up into five task groups and steamed toward Japan.

Aircraft from the task force's 16 aircraft carriers conducted air strikes on several airfields in the vicinity of Tokyo from **February 16-17**, to reduce the Japanese ability to use their air assets to counter the upcoming invasion at Iwo Jima. The air strikes were successful in eliminating over 500 aircraft from the Japanese inventory.

Following the Tokyo strikes, the task force turned its attention to Iwo Jima. Military leaders felt the small island some 760 miles south of Tokyo was critical real estate to have under control if operations in and around Japan were to be successful.

From **February 19-22**, eight battleships, eight cruisers, and 10 destroyers conducted the heaviest naval bombardment in history in support of the amphibious landing of over 70,000 Marines on the beaches of Iwo Jima. By the time *North Carolina's* time on the firing line was complete, she had fired 855 rounds from her 16-inch guns, and 2,753 rounds from her 5-inch guns.



February 1, 1946 – With the war over and USS *North Carolina* back on the East Coast, Captain Timothy O'Brien takes command of the Showboat, relieving Captain B. Hall Hanlon. O'Brien would be the final Commanding Officer, serving for the last 16 months of *North Carolina's* commissioned service.

Did You Know?

Although more than one million African American men and women served during World War II, the conditions in which they served were far from equitable and fraught with obstacles. The services were all segregated, maintaining separate units for African American service members and in many cases, restricting them to non-combatant support roles.

Despite the barriers, African Americans fought with distinction in every theater of the war.

Units like the Army Air Corps' Tuskegee Airman, who operated with honor in North Africa and Europe; the Army's 761st Tank Battalion, which was a part of Patton's Third Army; and the more than 18,000 "Montford Point Marines" who were trained at Camp Montford Point in Jacksonville, North Carolina.



Like the other services, the Navy was also segregated. For the most part, African Americans were limited to serving in the Navy’s Messman branch as cooks, mess attendants, and stewards. There were several examples however of African Americans stationed on board Navy ships challenging the norm or stepping up to demonstrate their potential beyond the mess decks.



On **December 7, 1941**, Mess Attendant Third Class Doris “Dorie” Miller manned a 50 caliber machine gun on the battleship USS *West Virginia* (BB 48) during the attack at Pearl Harbor. Ordered to the bridge to assist the mortally wounded Captain of the ship, Miller manned

the gun until he ran out of ammunition and was ordered to abandon ship. For his actions during the attack, Miller was awarded the Navy Cross, the first awarded to an African American, which was personally presented to him by Admiral Chester Nimitz in **May 1942**.

The week following the Pearl Harbor attack Miller was transferred to the cruiser USS *Indianapolis* (CA 35) where, in **July of 1942**, a group of African American sailors, perhaps inspired by their new shipmate’s experience, volunteered for additional duty as gunners.

Similarly, on board USS *North Carolina* in the **fall of 1944**, Steward’s Mate Second Class John Seagraves, an officer’s cook in the Wardroom Pantry, asked the Showboat’s Executive Officer, Commander Joe Stryker if he and several other Steward’s Mates could be 20mm gunners. Stryker approved the request and eight sailors from the Steward’s Branch began training.



More about the history of African Americans in the U.S. Navy can be found on the [Navy History and Heritage Command website](#).



Support the Showboat


Membership has its Benefits – Just a reminder that your Friends membership provides year-long access to the Showboat for you and your guests (number of guests dependent on membership level). In addition, you receive a 25% discount in the Gift Shop, 25% discount on Friends VIP Guided Tours, a subscription to the *Scuttlebutt* e-newsletter, and discounts on the Showboat’s Lifelong Learning Programs and tours such as Hidden Battleship, Firepower!, Power Plant, and Systems & Design tours.




If it’s time to renew your Friends membership, consider upgrading to the next level. Not only will you be increasing your commitment to the Showboat, but you may also have the opportunity to bring additional guests with you when you visit the Battleship or attend special events.

Most importantly, your membership and donations “Help Preserve the Legacy” and make it possible for the Friends to promote and enhance the visitors’ experience by helping to fund programs, acquisitions, and restoration of Battleship North Carolina.

Visit the Friends [renewal page](#) for details.

 Friends of the Battleship North Carolina Board of Directors 			
Michael Zalob <i>Chairman</i>		Ron Henderson <i>Vice Chairman</i>	
Jeff Mixon <i>Secretary</i>	Ronnie Rhodes <i>Treasurer</i>	Joe Calla <i>Member-at-Large</i>	Gordon Hume <i>Member-at-Large</i>
Jim Buell	Pat Cummings	Alex Dydula	Tom Finley
Nancie Giacalone	Geoff Kirby	Karen Marzilli	John Munn
Richard Rogers	Bruce Tingle	Richard Turner	
Frank Glossl <i>Executive Director</i>			

Scuttlebutt is published monthly by
 Friends of the Battleship North Carolina for its membership.
 Friends Chairman - Michael Zalob **Scuttlebutt** Editor - Gordon Hume
 1 Battleship Road, Wilmington, NC 28401

Scuttlebutt1@battleshipncfriends.com
info@battleshipncfriends.com
battleshipncfriends.com
 (910)399-9117