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## From the Chair



Though the first month of 2023 has already passed, I would like to wish a belated Happy New Year to all our Friends members!

2022 was a good year for the Friends. We enjoyed an increase in total memberships, had more members at higher donation levels, conducted more guided tours as the number of visitors increased, and provided more excellent programs for our members.

An example of one of those programs was the extremely successful "Wreaths of Honor" program we conducted over the holidays. We had hoped to sell about 100 wreaths during this inaugural effort and ended up selling nearly 200! Hats off to board members Joe Calla, Gordon Hume, Karen Marzilli, and the many other volunteers who made this event happen so successfully.

The mission of the Friends of the Battleship *North Carolina* is three-fold – to support the Battleship memorial, to enhance the visitor experience, and to keep the memory alive.

This mission has always been our guide, and this year I am emphasizing it as follows:

We will support the ship with financial donations, funding for special projects, assistance to the maintenance crew, and volunteer presence assisting ticket sales and visitor movement.

We will enhance the visitor experience by providing guided tours, both pre-scheduled and walk-ins, as well as supporting events like Hidden Battleship, Battleship 101, and our own "6 for 60" tour specials.

We will help keep the memory alive by educating our tour guides and ambassadors, training new volunteers, and supporting events to recognize living crew members and volunteers.

All of this is guided by a Board of Directors that is energized, efficient, and passionate about the ship and our mission. I am pleased to be in the company of such great individuals working hard to make all this happen.

2023 looks bright for the Friends. As part of our new "Friends on the Fantail" series of events, we intend to introduce new activities such as a 1940s-style Big Band concert, movies on the fantail, and various other social events. Of course, expect the highlight of the summer to be the 4<sup>th</sup> of July!

**BB55 FRIENDS ON THE FANTAIL**

I thank you for your generous support of our efforts and look forward to seeing you aboard the Battleship.

*Ron Henderson,*  
Chairman, Friends of the Battleship *North Carolina*



# What's Happening on the Showboat?

## CBDR\*

Upcoming events on  
*The Showboat*

### 6 for 60 Tours

February 4  
March 4  
April 1

### Battleship 101

February 18  
March 18

### Hidden Battleship

March 11 (Sold Out)  
May 13

40 participant limit

[Get your tickets](#)



\*Constant Bearing, Decreasing Range

**It All Started With A Big Bang!** – For the past several months an effort has been underway to create a new guided tour that focuses on the 16-inch and 5-inch gun systems making up Battleship *North Carolina's* main and secondary batteries. The effort came to fruition in early January when Friends' Executive Director and long-time tour guide Frank Glossl led a small group of visitors on the first *Big Bang Tour*.

the **BIG**  
**BANG**  
tour

The Big Bang Tour is designed to be a general overview of the battleship's gun systems "from the 35,000-foot level" rather than a technical tour according to retired Marine Lt. Col. John Munn, who spearheaded the development of the two-hour tour.



Frank Glossl discusses the fire control process with Big Bang Tour guests in Secondary Plot.

Participants learn the basic process for firing the guns, from target identification in the Combat Information Center and fire control directors to the development of fire control solutions in the main and secondary plot spaces below decks. The tour route also includes

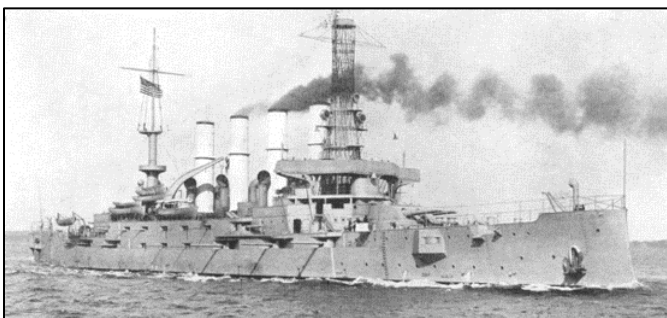
visits to magazines, handling rooms, mounts, and gun houses to follow the process of loading the guns.

Currently, the Big Bang Tour is available at 9 a.m. on Saturdays only and must be booked in advance through the Friends' website. The price for the tour is \$18 per person (plus admission) with tours being limited to six people.

The Big Bang Tour is just one of several guided tours sponsored by the Friends of the Battleship and led by certified tour guides. Other offerings include a tour of the Main Deck and above, the "City at Sea" tour conducted principally on the Battleship's second deck, and the "Showboat Tour" that guides visitors throughout the entire publicly accessible tour route. And a reminder that as part of your Friends membership, you are eligible for a 25% discount on tour prices.

[Click here](#) for more information about guided tours for your next visit to Battleship *North Carolina*.

## This Month in USS *North Carolina* History



**February 18, 1921** – USS *Charlotte* (ACR 12) was decommissioned at the Puget Sound Navy Yard in Bremerton, Washington. The armored cruiser had served from October 6, 1906, until June 7, 1920, as USS *North Carolina* before it was renamed *Charlotte* so the name

*North Carolina* could be used for a new battleship being built at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard in Virginia.

**February 8, 1922** – Work on six *South Dakota* class battleships (BB 49-54) was suspended as negotiations at the Washington Naval Conference concluded. The resulting treaty between the United States, Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan set limitations on the types of ships the signatories could build. The terms of the Treaty meant the work on six battleships, including *North Carolina* (BB 52), and six battlecruisers, would never be completed.

*North Carolina* was only 36.7 percent complete when work was halted.

**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 *South Dakota* (BB 57), *Massachusetts* (BB 59), *Alabama* (BB 60), and *Iowa* (BB 61), along with more than a dozen other cruisers and destroyers in support of operations against Japanese strongholds in Truk, Guam, Tinian, and Saipan.

The operations were part of the allied effort to deny Japan use of the islands in the central Pacific as a staging area for attacks on the U.S. fleet and against forces led by General Douglas MacArthur that were advancing toward the Philippines.



*USS North Carolina* was awarded her 8<sup>th</sup> Battle Star for actions taken during a series of operations conducted in the central Pacific between February 16 and May 1, 1944.

USS *North Carolina* spent the early part of **February 1945** at anchorage at Ulithi Atoll in the western Caroline Islands. While there, the Showboat made a significant change to her loadout of 16-inch projectiles in preparation for the impending operations at Iwo Jima.



Anticipating a lower probability of engaging Japanese battleships, *North Carolina* changed the loadout of her 16-inch projectiles so over 70 percent (873) of her 1,200 rounds were high capacity and only 315

armor piercing. Normally the loadout would have been made up of two-thirds of the projectiles being the armor-piercing variant. The other battleships in the fleet made similar adjustments.

*North Carolina*'s sailors sensed the change might be significant. In his February 3 diary entry, Seaman First Class Joseph Halas noted, "We have started to take off 16-inch armor-piercing shells and have been working all night on them and we are bringing on 16-inch bombardment shells so I guess the [enemy is] really going to catch hell the next time we go to sea."

Indeed, on February 10, the Showboat did go back to sea, this time assigned to Vice Admiral Marc Mitscher's Task Force 58.

USS *North Carolina* was part of a battle force made up of nearly 120 combat-ready ships, including 16 carriers, 8 battleships, 15 cruisers, 77 destroyers, and over 1,000 aircraft. The task force, now divided into five task groups, steamed toward Japan in mid-February.

Aircraft from the task force's 16 aircraft carriers conducted air strikes on several airfields in the vicinity of Tokyo from February 16-17, in an attempt to reduce the Japanese ability to use their aircraft 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 volcanic 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.

For four days, 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.

From his battle station halfway up the forward superstructure in Batt Two, Commander Harold Harnly, *North Carolina*'s executive officer, had a clear view of the action taking place on the small island.

"I watched our first salvo arc over to Iwo and send a geyser of dust and debris hundreds of feet into the air," Harnly recalled. "The din was terrific, and as the scheduled hour for the assault approached, it rose in a crescendo until it was just one continuous roar."

"The island disappeared almost entirely in a fog of smoke and dust through which the twinkle of bursting shells could barely be seen," Harnly continued, describing the scene. "It looked as though nothing above or below that piece of



earth could live through such a pounding."

And pound the island is exactly what the American fleet did.

"Today was quite a day ... we started

bombarding around 0600. At 0900 the first wave hit the beach and by 0930 the 4<sup>th</sup> wave had landed," Marine Private First Class George Kietzman wrote in his journal on February 19. "Opposition was very stiff and I'm afraid our boys met up with something worse than Tarawa... Our bombardment lasted just about 11 hours. We used our 5-inch as well as our 16-inch guns."

The following day Kietzman made note of the high salvo count that had originated from *North Carolina*.

"We're still hitting the island with what 16-inch ammo we have left..." Kietzman wrote on February 20. "We have a few [armor piercing] shells below and as the last resort

are going to use them in an effort to knock out the last [enemy] big guns.”

USS *North Carolina* completed her time on the firing line on February 22, with a flurry of salvos from her secondary battery aimed toward Mount Suribachi. During those four days of bombarding Iwo Jima, *North Carolina* had expended 855 of her 16-inch rounds, and 2,753 rounds had been fired from her 5-inch guns.

The next day, as the Showboat transited north to rendezvous with a task group that would continue its assault on Tokyo, word spread through the ship of an event on Iwo Jima that would eventually become an “enduring symbol of American resolve.”




“Word was passed today that ‘Old Glory’ was hoisted over ‘Hot Rocks’ today so maybe the worst of Iwo Jima is over,” Kietzman wrote.

“Hot Rocks” was the code name for Mount Suribachi, the highest point on Iwo Jima.

But it wasn’t over, the battle for Iwo Jima would continue until March 26.

By the end of the fighting, nearly 7,000 Marines had been killed and another 20,000 wounded. Nearly all of the approximately 20,000 Japanese soldiers on the island were killed in action with just over 200 captured by the Marines.

 *USS North Carolina* was awarded her 13<sup>th</sup> Battle Star for actions taken in support of the assault, invasion, and occupation of Iwo Jima.

**February 21, 2008** – Northrup Grumman delivered the Virginia class submarine *North Carolina* (SSN 777) to the Navy having been completed by Newport News Shipbuilding & Drydock Company in Newport News, Va.

*USS North Carolina* was officially commissioned in Wilmington on May 3, 2008.



## Did You Know?

The 855 rounds fired from USS *North Carolina*’s main battery during the bombardment of Iwo Jima accounted for 36 percent of the total number of 16-inch rounds (2,396) the Showboat expended during the entire war. The 2,753 rounds fired from her secondary battery were 23 percent of the nearly 12,000 total 5-inch rounds fired by the Showboat in all engagements (air and shore) and 36 percent of the 5-inch rounds fired in all her shore bombardment operations (7,736) during the war.

Even though the battle for Iwo Jima was declared “over” on **March 26, 1945**, American forces spent several more weeks clearing Japanese holdouts that were hiding in the island’s jungles and caves. Two of those holdouts managed to evade capture for nearly four years by hiding in caves. **On January 6, 1949**, two Imperial Japanese Navy machine gunners surrendered after two Air Force radio operators picked them up as they walked along the island’s main road.

## Support the Showboat

**We’re Always Looking for New Friends** – Do you know someone who has shown an interest in Battleship *North Carolina*? Why not make them a new Friend? Individual memberships start as low as \$45 a year and help to increase the impact of all the Battleship’s programs – its artifact acquisition, support of exhibits, research, restoration projects, and commitment to education.

And don’t forget, there is now an easy way for local businesses to support the Battleship through the Friends’ new Business Membership Program. The program provides the opportunity for businesses to participate at one of three membership levels; Battle Group Commander, Task Force Commander, or Fleet Commander.



Each Business Membership level comes with a variety of privileges including unlimited visits for the cardholder, guest admissions, complimentary admission tickets, and invitations to the Friends July 4<sup>th</sup> event and VIP Reception. Additional details regarding the Friends Business Membership can be found by visiting the [Friends website](#).

**Amazon's Smile Fades** – Online retailing giant Amazon recently announced it will discontinue its AmazonSmile program as of February 20. AmazonSmile is a program where a donation equal to .05% of eligible purchases is provided to the charity of the purchaser's choice at no additional cost to the purchaser.

The Friends of the Battleship began participating in AmazonSmile in 2014, shortly after the program was established. In the eight years the Friends have been active, over \$2,500 has been received from Amazon through the program.

The Board of Directors thanks the many Friends and Battleship *North Carolina* enthusiasts who designated the Friends as the recipient for donations through the AmazonSmile program. Donations received through the program were welcome additions to our effort to *Help Preserve the Legacy* of Battleship *North Carolina* and her crew.

Finally, a shout-out to another Friends Business Member



Thank you for supporting Battleship *North Carolina* and the Friends

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