



# SCUTTLEBUTT

April 2021

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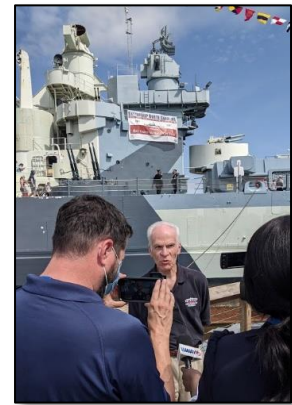
## What's Happening on the Showboat?

### Friends Kick-off Countdown to 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

A recent press conference conducted onboard the Battleship *North Carolina* served the dual purpose of commemorating a significant event in the ship's history while starting the countdown to a milestone occurring later this year.

The April 9 press event marked the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battleship's commissioning and kicked off six months of events to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the "Showboat" arriving in Wilmington.

The events, sponsored by the Friends of the Battleship *North Carolina*, "will serve to help first-time visitors discover, and returning guests rediscover, the history and legacy of the Showboat," Friends chairman Michael Zalob told the gathering.



April 9 - Michael Zalob talks to the media.

Events on tap during selected weekends over the coming six months include:

**"6 for 60 Tours"** where guests will receive a 60-minute guided, topside tour for only \$6 per person with paid Battleship admission. On these tours, guests will hear first-hand from trained tour guides, how the crew of *North Carolina* operated during wartime using everything from the gigantic 16-inch guns to the Kingfisher aircraft. They will also hear stories about the Sailors who made up the 2,300-man crew as well as gain insight into the ship's activities and the role it played in World War II.

**"Raise the Flag"** weekends will provide visitors an opportunity to take home an American flag flown over the Battleship. Flags will be available for a \$40 donation, or visitors can provide their own American flag to be hoisted over the Showboat. Assisted by local veteran and scout organizations, participants will learn how to properly fold and display the flag and will receive a certificate of authenticity, with the date the flag was flown, signed by retired Navy Captain Terry Bragg, Executive Director of the Battleship.



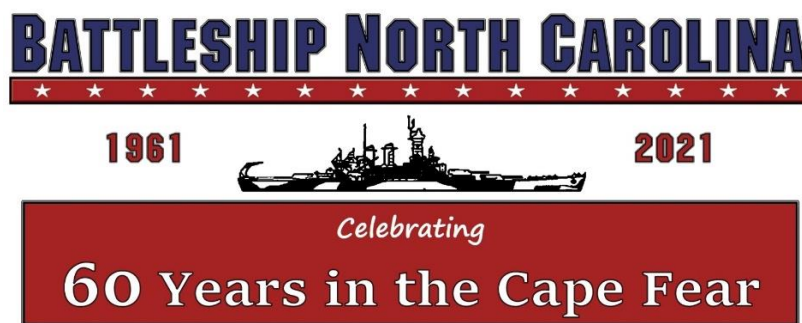
If the City of Wilmington conducts its annual **July 4<sup>th</sup>** fireworks, members of the Friends of the Battleship *North Carolina* will have the opportunity to watch the display from the deck of the Showboat. The Friends will host as many members as can be safely accommodated while keeping in compliance with current COVID restrictions.

Tickets to this popular, members-only event will be limited and will go fast. Specific information on how to get tickets will be available over the next few weeks and will be available on the [Friends website](#).

Finally, the Friends will host a **60th anniversary event** on October 2 celebrating the Battleship's 1961 arrival in Wilmington. Details for this members-only event are still being developed and will be made available once they are finalized.

Details for all events are available on the [Friends website](#).

Don't miss your opportunity for a great summer of activities on the "Showboat".



### Volunteers Return

Cheers could be heard throughout the Cape Fear in early March as volunteers making up the maintenance/restoration and cleaning crews returned to the Battleship to resume their continuing effort of keeping the Showboat "ship shape" for visitors. The crews had been absent from the ship since December, remaining away through the holiday season and during the first couple of months of the year.

As the Covid vaccines became available and the public health environment improved, it was determined the volunteers could safely return to the ship on March 10.

The crews lost no time in picking up where they had left off prior to the break. Painting, restoration, maintenance, and cleaning priorities were determined and the teams got back to work while complying with social distancing and masking requirements.



Two Members of the Wednesday maintenance gang back at work.

In addition to the maintenance and cleaning crews returning, the cadre of tour guides returned to the Showboat on April 3, ready to provide guided tours to guests who wanted to enhance their visit. Like the maintenance and cleaning crews, tour guides are required to mask up, maintain social distancing, and limit the sizes of their tour groups.

## Battleship Offers Knives and Collectibles Made of Showboat Steel and Teak

Battleship *North Carolina* has launched the Battle★Star Collection to sell finely crafted products made from materials taken directly from the ship during periods of restoration.

“We are proud to be able to share the USS *North Carolina* with the public by selling heirloom-quality products that repurpose the historic materials that built this great American battleship,” said retired Navy Captain Terry Bragg, Executive Director of the Battleship.

The collection includes both Battle★Star Knives and Battle★Star Steel and Teak. The steel and teak used in the products come from hull and deck restoration projects.

To create Battle★Star Knives, a talented American bladesmith has transformed steel



recovered from the Battleship’s hull restoration into artistically beautiful objects, built for functional use or display.

Battle★Star Knives are crafted at Ironman Forge from original USS *North Carolina* steel from the bow of the historic ship. The collection begins with the Kill Devil Hills K-Bar and the Outer Banks Oyster Shucker.



Each item of Battle★Star Steel and Teak is crafted from material taken from the hull or deck of the battleship and will vary slightly as the material remains un-retouched. The products are sure to enhance a mantle, bookcase, or desk.

All products come with a Certificate of Authenticity or an attached plaque.

Sales are online only.

Visit [www.battleshipnc.com/store/steel/](http://www.battleshipnc.com/store/steel/) to see the available products.

## Swinging with the Showboat Band

The newest episode of the Showboat Podcast has been posted. This first episode about the Showboat’s band explores how the ship’s musicians enhanced the quality of life aboard the battleship. The episode also explores the history of Navy musicians and how they are trained today. You can listen to the Showboat Podcast by [clicking here](#).



## This Month in Showboat History



April 9, 1941 - The colors are raised during the commissioning of USS *North Carolina*.

**April 9, 1941** – USS *North Carolina* officially joined the fleet as it is placed into commission during a ceremony at New York Navy Yard. It had been 18 years since the United States had commissioned its last battleship and the addition of USS *North Carolina* provided the nation with a visible symbol of strength and power.

“Throughout her service, may the *North Carolina* (BB 55) be a symbol of progress through strength, and a tangible evidence of American readiness for its own defense,” President Franklin Roosevelt wrote in a telegram read by the Commandant of the Third Naval District. “I know she will help to protect this country faithfully in traditional Navy fashion.”

Speaking to the crowd at the commissioning ceremony, Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox noted that the new battleship was “one of a new line of ships that will give the United States unchallenged supremacy on the seas.”

**April 30, 1944** – As American carrier aircraft conducted air strikes on the Japanese naval base at Truk Atoll some 600 miles southeast of Guam, the two Kingfisher aircraft from *North Carolina* were tasked with rescuing an airman whose plane had gone down during the strikes. Lieutenant (JG) John Burns was flying one of the Showboat Kingfishers and would later give the following account of the day to a newspaper reporter:



April 30, 1944 – USS *North Carolina*'s Kingfisher aircraft rescuing downed pilots off Truk.

*"A number of our planes were shot down and the men had taken to rubber boats. They were close off the atoll, under Japanese guns. I was ordered to take my plane, which had pontoon floats, on a rescue mission.*

*I went out with another plane of the same type. We had been given the position of a man who had been in the water about 22 hours. He had landed inside a reef, right under the noses of the Japanese guns. The [enemy] had been shooting at him all day.*

*When darkness fell he had worked his way over the reef, and into open water, where we found him. The other plane with me landed in the water to pick him up. But a stiff gust of wind turned it upside down.*

*Then I landed and picked up the man in the boat, and the pilot and radio man of the plane which had been with me. The men got on the wings and I taxied five or six miles out to sea, where we came to a submarine which took the three men aboard.*

*I flew back again. I had been told by radio of the position of another man, close in to the reef, and I got him on the wings.*

*I heard of other men in the water. It took me two hours, taxiing around, to find three more men. They told me of seeing another plane crash. Other planes overhead helped direct me to the scene, and in two more hours, I had located three more men. Then I had seven men on my wings.*



The Commanding Officer of the submarine USS *Tang* (SS 563) pictured with 22 airmen rescued April 29-30, 1944, including 10 delivered by *North Carolina's* Kingfisher.

*I taxied out to sea again and found the submarine, but my plane had taken such a beating from the wind and water that we had to destroy it. So my radio man and I got on the submarine, too."*

With the 10 airmen rescued by *North Carolina's* Kingfisher, the submarine USS *Tang* (SS 563) ended the day with 22 downed airmen tucked safely away for the transit to Pearl Harbor.

Burns was awarded the Navy Cross for his actions. The citation accompanying his award read, in part, "Flying boldly into an area within close range of hostile shore batteries Lieutenant Burns successfully landed his craft twice under extremely perilous conditions of wind and sea, taxiing extensively to pick up ten airmen from their hazardous position in enemy territory."

## Did You Know?

### The Showboat's First C.O. was Held in High Regard

by Mary Ames Booker, Curator, Battleship *North Carolina*

On April 9, 1941, USS *North Carolina* was commissioned into the U.S. Navy. A new design from the days of the dreadnoughts, she was built to keep pace with the aircraft carriers, a new type of ship following the first World War. There were high expectations on that warm morning in Brooklyn at the New York Navy Yard.

At the helm on the momentous occasion was 54-year-old Olaf Mandt Hustvedt. He was from Decorah, Iowa, and attended Luther College before his appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy, where he graduated in 1909. Hustvedt served in USS *West Virginia* and USS *Raleigh* until 1912. He then took instructions in ordnance engineering and earned a Master of Science degree from

George Washington University in 1914. During WWI he served in USS *New York* which operated with the British Grand Fleet.

Over the next two decades, Hustvedt quickly rose through the ranks as a gunnery officer on several flagships as well as being assigned to the Bureau of Ordnance and the Naval Gun Factory. In February 1941, he was placed in charge of the fitting out of the *North Carolina* and then in command on April 9<sup>th</sup>.

Hustvedt was held in high regard by those who served with him.

"Hearty congratulations to the magnificent Captain of our mightiest ship. You will please pardon the elated writer for having proudly informed his coworkers that in 1915-16 he served as a Bosun's Mate and heavy gun pointer under the Captain when he was a LT(jg) aboard the *Utah*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Div. When I was being paid off in 1916 you presented me with a splendid letter of recommendation which I still cherish as an expression of a mutual feeling – for I held you in no less esteem." Clyffe W. Davison, May 16, 1941



Captain Olaf Hustvedt, first Commanding Officer of USS *North Carolina*.



Capt. Hustvedt (r) on the *North Carolina*'s bridge wing with his Executive Officer, Cdr. Andrew Shepard.

For months Hustvedt successfully took the new battleship through her paces. The sea trials included a magnificent 19-gun salvo fired at night on August 29, 1941. The Navy invited 20 noted journalists from major newspapers, magazines, radio, newsreel, and wire services as witnesses. They reported to the world that the U.S. Navy was strong enough to defeat any foe at sea. It was a message particularly aimed at Europe.

"The *North Carolina* has received the finest press both regular and pictorial of any ship that I know of in the Navy in the past 20 years," wrote LCDR John Tuthill Jr., Public Relations Officer for the Third

Naval District, the week following the demonstration. "We have been the recipient of numerous letters from the newspaper men expressing their gratitude for the many courtesies and consideration shown them by everybody."

In September 1941, the U.S. Navy released its list of officers who were promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral and Hustvedt was among them. He left USS *North Carolina* to assume new duties on October 23, 1941 and went on to eventually retire from active duty as a Vice Admiral in 1946.

The Battleship *North Carolina* archives house collections of letters and two scrapbooks from the Hustvedt family. They were recently scanned as part of an NC CARES: Humanities Relief Grant from the North Carolina Humanities Council. Nearly 100 letters attest to the respect and

admiration for Captain Hustvedt from his friends, classmates, fellow officers, politicians, and dignitaries from New York and Washington, DC.

Examples include:

"Heartiest congratulations and best wishes on your selection," wrote the Chief of Bureau of Navigation Chester Nimitz.

"My heartiest and warmest congratulations. Have been reading in the papers about the *North Carolina*; she must be a grand ship. Quite different [from] the old battleships. 1923-1941 is 18 years and that is a long time." Harold Train, Chief of Staff, Battle Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet

"It was indeed a very great pleasure to me to see your name where it belonged," wrote Admiral Isaac Kidd Commander Battleship Division One, *USS Arizona*. Admiral Kidd was on the bridge when the *Arizona* was attacked on December 7, 1941.

From 23 Wall Street, Mr. Morgan wrote, "The SUN of yesterday evening had in it the welcome news of your selection as Rear Admiral. My wife and I are delighted to hear of it and send you our heartiest congratulations and best wishes."

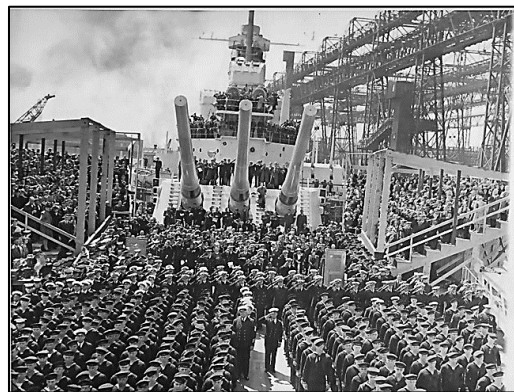
And from 2 Wall Street, Mr. Morgan wrote, "I have just read in the paper of your promotion, and I write to send you my wife's and my warmest congratulations and good wishes. We have been so interested to see the photographs of the first broadside."



## Talk Like a Sailor

**Plank Owner** – An individual who is a member of a ship's crew on the day the ship is placed in commission is a "plank owner" of that ship. On April 9, 1941, there were 82 officers and 1108 enlisted sailors assigned to the *North Carolina*. Those 1190 men were, and always will be, the plank owners of *USS North Carolina*.

**Commissioning Pennant** – The commissioning pennant is the distinguishing mark of a commissioned Navy ship. The American pennant is blue at the hoist, with seven white stars. The rest of the pennant consists of single red and white stripes. The pennant is



April 9, 1941 - The "plank owners" of *USS North Carolina* stand in formation at the commissioning.

flown at all times as long as a ship is in commissioned status, except when a flag officer or senior civilian official is embarked and flies his personal flag in its place.



*North Carolina's original commissioning pennant was made at the New York Navy Yard and was presented as a gift from the workmen at the shipyard.*

and it was often difficult to tell a naval ship from a merchantman. Navies began to adopt long, narrow pennants to be flown by their ships at the mainmast head to distinguish themselves from merchant ships. This became standard naval practice. (Source: *Naval History and Heritage Command*)

Narrow pennants of this kind go back several thousand years. They appear in ancient Egyptian art and were flown from ships' mastheads and yardarms from at least the Middle Ages; they appear in Medieval manuscript illustrations and Renaissance paintings. Professional national navies began to take form late in the seventeenth century. All ships at that time were sailing ships,

## Support the Showboat



**Time to Renew?** – 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. Visit the [Friends renewal page](#) for details.

**Amazon Makes Friends Smile** – As a result of qualified purchases made through Amazon Smile during the final quarter of 2020, the Friends of the Battleship *North Carolina* received a donation of \$138.33. The donation represents 0.5% of the nearly \$28,000 in Amazon purchases made by Showboat supporters. Overall in 2020, the Friends received a total of \$415.73 through the Amazon Smile program.

It's easy to designate the Friends of the Battleship *North Carolina* to be the recipient of an Amazon Smile donation – at no cost to you. Find out how by clicking the button below.



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