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## What's Happening on the Showboat?

**Friends on the Fantail Event Announced** – A Saturday evening concert beneath the big guns of Battleship *North Carolina* has been announced as the kick-off to this year's Friends on the Fantail series of events. "A Musical Salute to the Battleship" featuring the Brunswick Big Band, will be held Saturday, April 29, the 61<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Battleship being dedicated as the state's World War II memorial. The Brunswick Big Band will play a variety of 40's-era music and patriotic selections.

The free, 2-hour performance will begin at 6:30 p.m. and is set to be an informal event with concertgoers encouraged to bring their favorite chair, beverage, and

snack to enjoy during the concert. The free tickets for the concert will be available through the Friends' [website](#) beginning April 15.

Donations will be accepted at the concert.

The Brunswick Big Band is a non-profit group of community musicians performing "The Great American Songbook." The mostly retired members of the group perform at a variety of area festivals, fund-raisers, and other events bringing to their audiences sophisticated and elegant jazz arrangements. Many of the band's appearances have benefitted the Brunswick County public schools by helping students and teachers with instruments and musical programs.

**Raffle Quilt to be Revealed** – In addition to the Brunswick Big Band playing beneath the Battleship's big guns, the Friends will unveil a homemade, queen-size quilt, donated by a small group of Leland-area quilters, to will be raffled off to support the Friends' continuing effort to "Help Preserve the Legacy."

The drawing for the quilt will be held in October with tickets going on sale for the first time at the April 29 concert. Tickets for the raffle will be available for \$5 per ticket or 5 tickets for \$20.

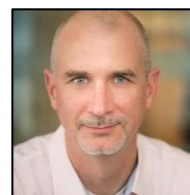


**Naval Historian to Speak** – Award-winning naval historian Trent Hone will provide two presentations on Friday, April 28 on board Battleship *North Carolina*.

The first lecture, set to begin at 1 p.m., will focus on tactics, doctrine, and how the U.S. Navy's approach to combat evolved up to and during World War II, including the battleship and its role.

The second lecture, focusing on Admiral Nimitz and the organizations he created and led during the war will begin at 3 p.m.

Both lectures will be conducted in the Wardroom. Those wishing to attend are asked to contact Kim Sincox at [kim.sincox@ncdcr.gov](mailto:kim.sincox@ncdcr.gov) by April 21.



Author Trent Hone

# CBDR\*

Upcoming events on

## *The Showboat*

### **Battleship 101**

April 22  
May 20

### **Trent Hone Naval History Lectures**

April 28, Wardroom  
1 & 3 p.m.

### **A Musical Salute To the Battleship**

April 29, Fantail  
6:30 p.m.

### **6 for 60 Tours**

May 6  
June 3

### **Hidden Battleship**

May 13 (Sold Out)  
November 11  
40 participant limit

### **Raise the Flag**

May 27  
June 10



\*Constant Bearing, Decreasing Range

## This Month in USS *North Carolina* History

**April 29, 1816** – Congress authorized the building of nine ships “to rate not less than 74 guns each.” The ship of the line USS *North Carolina* was commissioned some eight years later on **June 24, 1824**. For two years, beginning in **April 1825**, the 196-foot *North Carolina* served as the flagship of Commodore John Rogers in the Mediterranean Sea, helping establish trade opportunities for the fledgling republic in the Eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea.



Ship of the line USS *North Carolina*

**Stepping of the Mast** – Battleship *North Carolina*’s main mast took its place aft of the ship’s two 85-foot stacks, on **April 5, 1941**, just four days before the ship was commissioned at the New York Navy Yard in Brooklyn. During the stepping of the mast ceremony, a metal box was placed in the base of the mast that contained: One half dollar; eighteen quarters; eleven dimes; twenty-three nickels; forty-six pennies; a proof set of 1941 coins minted at the San Francisco Mint and, according to ship records, “untouched by human hands”; one St. Christopher medal; one English half-penny; and one Chinese cent.

A long-held maritime tradition, “stepping the mast” involves formally placing a ship’s main mast into position. Ancient Greek and Roman mariners would place coins at the base of the mast as the mast was put into place, believing the coins would provide passage to the afterlife if the ship were to sink.



**Apr 9, 1941** – USS *North Carolina* joins the fleet.

**April 9, 1941** – USS *North Carolina* (BB 55) officially joined the fleet as it was placed into commission during a ceremony at New York Navy Yard. *North Carolina* was the first United States battleship to be commissioned since USS *West Virginia* (BB 48) in December 1923.

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

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

**April 21 - 24, 1944** – USS *North Carolina* was assigned to Vice Admiral Marc Mitscher’s Task Force 58, as carrier aircraft conducted air strikes on the north coast of New Guinea. The air strikes provided support to forces commanded by General Douglas MacArthur as they conducted landings at Hollandia, Humboldt Bay, Aitape, and Tanahmerah Bay.



USS *North Carolina* was awarded her 9<sup>th</sup> Battle Star for actions taken during the operations in New Guinea from April 21 through 24, 1944.



**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 aviator whose plane had gone down during the strikes. Lieutenant (JG) John Burns was flying one of the Kingfishers and rescued the aviator they had been tasked to find, but also rescued the pilot and radio operator from the second *North Carolina* Kingfisher, which had been hit by a stiff wind and flipped over after it had landed on the water.

After taxiing six miles to the submarine USS *Tang* (SS 563) to deposit the three aviators, Burns returned to the area of the downed planes having heard there were additional men in the water. Burns was able to find an additional seven aviators and like the first three, took them out to the waiting *Tang*.

Upon arriving at the *Tang*, Burns realized he had another challenge.

“My plane had taken such a beating from the wind and water that we had to destroy it,” Burns would recall years later, “so my radio man and I got on the submarine, too.”

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



**April 30, 1944** -- *North Carolina*’s Kingfisher makes its second trip to the submarine *Tang* with rescued airmen.

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.”

**April 1945** – The battle for Okinawa continued with USS *North Carolina* joining three aircraft carriers, two light carriers, three other battleships, four light cruisers, and 12 destroyers, in support of the U.S. 10<sup>th</sup> Army’s landing on the beaches of Okinawa. In addition to the task force providing support for the landing operations, they also had to deal with the added threat of what seemed like, unending attacks by Japanese kamikazes.

On **April 6**, an estimated 182 Japanese kamikazes in 22 groups attacked the Allied ships. *North Carolina* shot down three of the attacking aircraft.



Photo showing damage to *North Carolina*’s Sky II director.

At 1305 a ship from within the allied formation fired at a low-flying kamikaze and accidentally struck the base of *North Carolina*’s port side secondary battery director (Sky II), located just above the signal bridge, with a 5-inch projectile. Chief Fire Controlman Edward Brenn, Fire Controlman 1/c John Watson, and Seaman 1/c Carl Karam Jr. were killed and 44 other men were wounded.

Fire Controlman 1/c Harold Smith, recalled later that Mark 51 directors (used for the 40mm guns) were installed just below Sky II and Sky III with a 5-inch mount assigned to each director to increase the speed of changing direction to combat the kamikazes. Brenn and Watson had just recently been assigned to the port side director having previously been stationed in the Secondary Battery Plotting Room three levels below the Main Deck.

The friendly fire incident had an immense impact on the crew of USS *North Carolina*.

“Today I am starting this log on events happening in the Southwest Pacific,” Fire Controlman 3/c Jerry Kass wrote in his journal. “The main reason I am writing this log is because three men in my division got killed today and I knew them all well. It kind of gives you a funny feeling I cannot express or write here. It seems as if tomorrow I will wake up and find it all a dream. ...I hope I never see a day like today again.”

The number of casualties caused by the incident was likely higher than what might have been had the director been hit just a few minutes earlier.

“Let me explain why there were so many of us in that small space on the signal bridge,” explained Richard Fox several years later. Fox was a Marine assigned to 7<sup>th</sup> Division and a member of a 20mm gun crew on the bow.



Watson (l) and Brenn together on liberty.

"The Japanese planes were coming in, and the Task Force was turning into the wind and speeding up to 27 knots to launch planes off the carriers. We had to hurry to unload and cover the guns and run like hell before the bow went under. The signal bridge was the designated gathering place for the bow gun crews.

"There were fourteen 20mm guns up on the bow and three men on each gun; 42 of us in all," Fox continued. "The signal bridge 40s and 20s were still firing when we got up there, and that's when we got hit."

Unfortunately, the three friendly fire deaths were not the only losses the *North Carolina* crew would realize that day.

Later in the afternoon, as one of Showboat's Kingfisher aircraft was preparing to be hoisted back onto the ship, the plane capsized and was lost. The plane's pilot was recovered from the water, but the crewman, Aviation Radioman 1/c Eldon Means, was never found and declared missing at sea.



Guests arrive to the dedication ceremony for the new World War II memorial.

**April 29, 1962** – The USS *North Carolina* Battleship Memorial was dedicated as the state's memorial to the men and women from North Carolina who served during World War II and to the approximately 11,000 North Carolinians who gave their lives in service during the war.

The thousands of people who attended the dedication heard from the former chief of naval operations, Admiral Arleigh Burke, who honored the veterans of World War II, and from North Carolina Governor Terry Sanford who vowed, "... no stone will be left unturned to the end that this will be the greatest World War II memorial in the United States."



A large crowd was on hand for the dedication of the new memorial.

## Did You Know?

**Decks, level, platforms** – A deck on a ship can either be a complete deck or a partial deck. Complete decks run the full length of the ship while a partial deck runs only part of the length of the ship. A ship's main deck is the highest deck that extends from stem to stern with complete decks below the main deck being numbered sequentially downward (Second Deck, Third Deck, etc.) A partial deck below the lowest complete deck is called a platform and is also numbered downward (First Platform, Second Platform, etc.)

Decks above the main deck are called superstructure decks or levels. They are also numbered sequentially but upward with the first level above the main deck being the 01 Level, followed by the 02 Level, 03 Level, etc.

**Compartment and Door Numbering System** – Watertight compartments are designated by a three-part system of letters and numbers.

The first part designates in which the part of the ship the compartment is located. At the time USS *North Carolina* was built, ships were divided into three main divisions and lettered A, B, and C from forward to aft. Compartments in each division were numbered beginning at the forward end of each division.

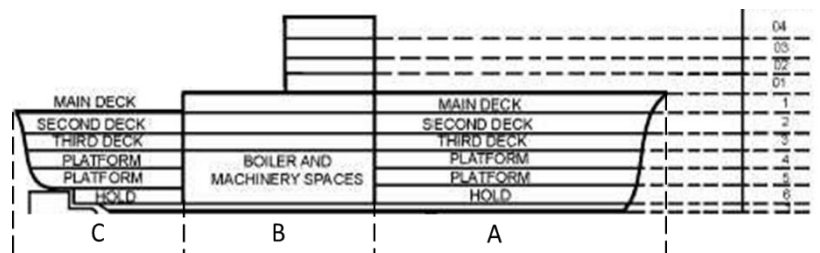
Division A is all of the space between the stem and the forward transverse bulkhead of the forward machinery compartment.

Division B is all of the space between the forward transverse bulkhead of the forward machinery compartment and the aft transverse bulkhead of the aft machinery compartment.

Division C is all of the space aft of the aft transverse bulkhead of the aft machinery compartment.

Watertight compartments in each division on the main deck are numbered from 101 to 199, those on the second deck 201 to 299, third deck 301 to 399, and if the next deck was a partial deck (platform) those spaces are numbered 401 to 499, and so on.

Similarly, compartments above the main deck (superstructure decks or levels) are numbered 0101 to 0199 for the 01 level, 0201 to 0299 on the 02 level, etc.



The compartment number is completed with a number/letter combination indicating the side of the ship the compartment is located (even for port, odd for starboard) and designating the contents or main use of the space (i.e., 'A' for storerooms, 'C' for command and control spaces, 'E' for machinery spaces, and 'L' for living compartments).

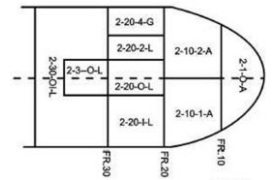
Therefore, a living space on the second deck, port side in the forward part of the ship might be numbered A-204-2L. A storeroom amidship on the starboard side might be numbered B-312-1A.



Doors have a similar three-part numbering system with the first part being the deck/level number, the second part being the closest frame number forward of the door, and the third part being the side of the ship the door is located. So, door 2-80-1 is on the second deck at frame 80 on the starboard side.

All compartments and doors have label plates on or above the door that provide the door number, the purpose of the compartment the door leads into, and the compartment number.

Note: Compartment numbering on ships built after 1949 is slightly different and is more similar to the door numbering system. Compartment numbers are now based on the deck, the frame number of the forward-most transverse bulkhead, and the side and purpose of the compartment. So, a compartment number of 2-20-1-L would indicate the space is on the second deck, the forward bulkhead is at frame 20 on the starboard side, and the compartment is a living space.



## Support the Showboat

**Don't Miss the Show** – The countdown to July 4th is well underway and now would be a great time to ensure your Friends membership does not expire at a most inopportune time. Memberships must be current to request tickets to attend July 4th activities aboard the Battleship once they become available later this Spring. Check the expiration date on the front of your membership card and, if necessary, [renew now](#) to avoid an unexpected change to your Independence Day plans.

And last but certainly not least...  
A shout out to our newest Friends Business Member



107 N. 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
Mebane, North Carolina  
[brightpennybrewing.com](http://brightpennybrewing.com)

Thank you for supporting Battleship North Carolina and the Friends

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