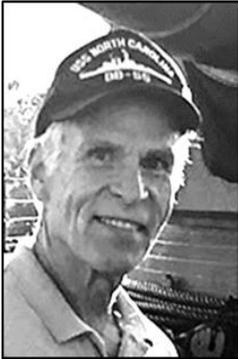




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From the Chair



The USS *North Carolina* Battleship Commission met on May 27 for one of their regular meetings. In addition to hearing from Battleship Executive Director Terry Bragg, Friends of the Battleship Chairman, Michael Zalob had the opportunity to bring the commission up-to-date on recent Friends activities. Following is the presentation Zalob made to the Commission.

It is a privilege to be in my position, associated with so many talented and dedicated volunteers. You have seen in the Captain's reports the number of hours spent by our volunteers on ship projects.

The Friends have been very successful this past year, and we are redoubling our efforts in this one. Let me give a snapshot of some of the additional items we have going forward.

- We now offer tour reservations online, with tours available seven days a week. Last year a majority of the 900 tours we conducted were walk-ins, principally on weekends. We now have tours reserved on a near-daily basis.
- At the Blee family reunion in March, we announced the dedication of our decent training program in honor of the late Captain Ben Blee, a former Combat Intelligence

Officer aboard USS *North Carolina* and a past Chair of the Battleship Commission.

- In cooperation with UNCW, we have initiated an internship program, worth four credit hours, starting in August. We have a five-year commitment for the program and can accommodate three students a year. I must express a strong thank you to commissioner Braye for her assistance in establishing the program. As an aside, this internship is the result of a conversation at a commission dinner last year.
- Using our newly purchased tent with the Friends logo, we had a booth at this year's Azalea Festival, Southport's Spring Festival, and Founder's Day in Belville. We intend to continue showing the flag later this year at Riverfest and Leland Under the Lights event.
- The Friends sent American flags flown over Battleship *North Carolina*, along with certificates, to 11 living ship's crew. We wanted to honor them while they are still with us.
- Among the several ship improvements we have funded, are two new "Nancy" lights that will be installed during the mast repair. We also contributed four new lenses for the Spot 1 range finder.
- With the July 4th fireworks event back, we will be hosting over 800 Friends members, families, and guests. We will also be hosting a pre-fireworks reception to thank our top membership categories.

Earlier I mentioned our great volunteers, but I want to also acknowledge the terrific support we receive from the ship's staff. Despite the challenges and barriers of Covid, the staff has gone above and beyond in assisting us.

Finally, I want to assure you that the Friends' goal remains to promote the mission of the ship and enhance the visitor's experience.

What's Happening on the Showboat?

CBDR*

Upcoming events on
The Showboat

6 for 60 Tours

July 2
August 6

Celebrate the Legacy

June 24-25

July 4th Fireworks

Advance tickets required

Battleship 101

July 9

Hidden Battleship

Limited to 40 participants
November 12

Book your tours in
advance by clicking [here](#).



*Constant Bearing, Decreasing Range



Fireworks Celebration Approaching – With Independence Day quickly approaching, members of the Friends of the Battleship *North Carolina* are gathering their tickets and parking passes preparing to watch the City of Wilmington's annual fireworks display from the deck of the Showboat.

The limited number of tickets to be on the deck of the ship for this year's celebration were sold out quickly, but it is still possible to watch the fireworks display from Battleship Park or along the SECU Walkway that encircles the ship. There will be no parking passes issued for those watch from the park or the walkway. Limited on-street parking may be available on a first-come, first-served basis on Battleship Road. (Come down USS *North Carolina* Road and make a right on Battleship Road.)

An added feature to this year's onboard celebration is a special pre-fireworks reception in the *North Carolina's* Wardroom for Friends members at the Commander, Captain, and Commodore levels. Invitations to the reception were sent out to eligible members via email. Only members who have received their fireworks tickets are eligible to attend. If you are eligible and did not receive an invitation, contact the Friends office at (910)399-9117.

For our members with tickets to this year's celebration, please note:

- Parking in the Battleship parking lot will be on a first-come, first-served basis.
- We anticipate having parking spaces for all ticket holders, however, we encourage you to carpool with your guests and friends if possible.
- Please follow the directions of the parking attendants.
- We ask you to park nose-in only (e.g. no backing in.)
- Please follow the appropriate signs to board the ship – Lieutenant JG, Lieutenant, and Lt. Commander members to the left of the Visitor Center; Commander, Captain, Commodore through the Visitor Center's main entrance.



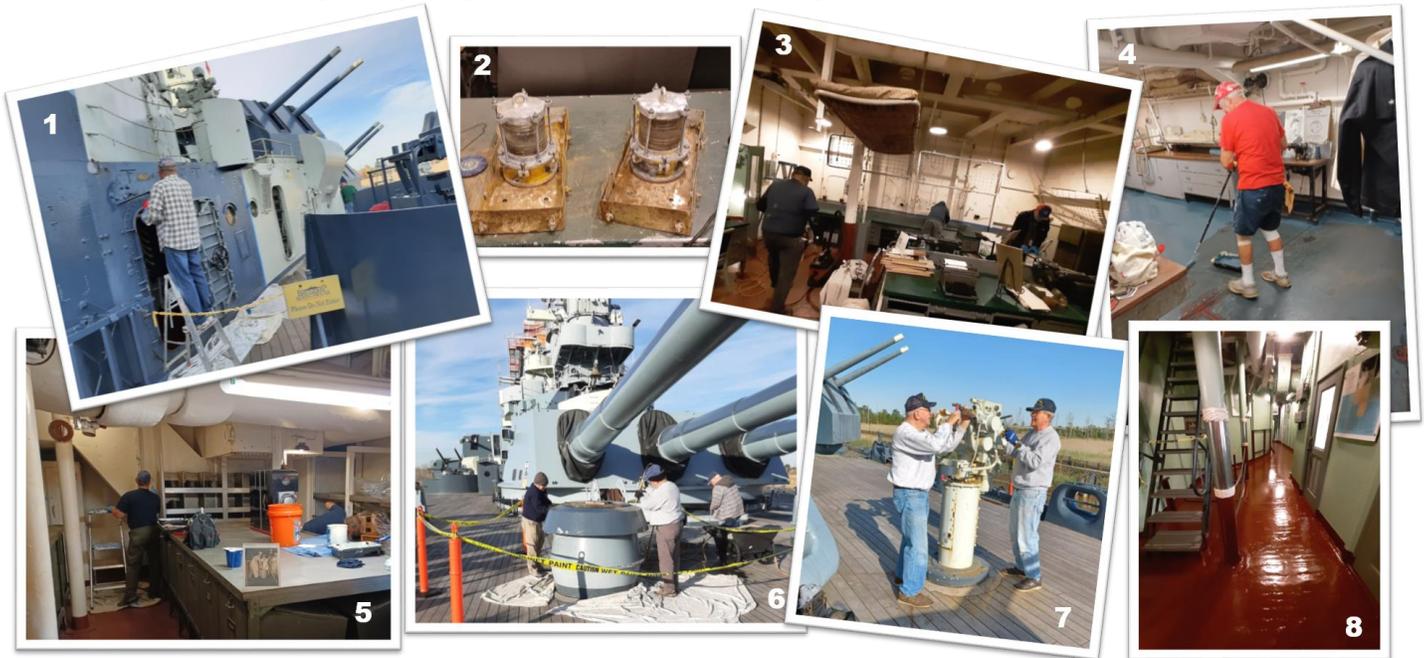
- The Friends have authorized several food trucks to offer food and beverages for sale in the Battleship parking lot.
- Feel free to bring refreshments and food from home for you and your guests.
- Please refrain from bringing glass or glass containers.
- Please be patient when exiting the celebration and follow the parking attendants' directions.

We thank you for your cooperation and look forward to seeing you on July 4th.

Keeping the Showboat Ready to Show – With the summer visitor season underway, the task of ensuring the Showboat is in “shipshape” for visitors is an ongoing effort by two groups of dedicated volunteers. Over the past several months, the “Wednesday Gang” and the “Thursday Cleaning Crew” haven’t skipped a beat while dealing with the weather, whether hot, cold, rainy, or windy, and with the challenges of getting their work done

with visitors exploring the decks of Battleship *North Carolina*.

“The ship is beautiful and in amazing condition,” and “The entire ship is incredibly well maintained and all the spaces toured were in great shape and very presentable,” are common refrains in the review sections of sites like Google, Trip Advisor, and Yelp.



1. Volunteers get the starboard side ready for visitors; 2. Blinker lights removed from the yardarm were stripped and prepared for reinstallation and painting; 3. The Flag Office gets a well-deserved restoration; 4. The deck of the Tailor Shop gets a new coat of paint; 5. The new Provisions Issue Room begins to take shape; 6. Paint is stripped off a ventilation hood as part of the preservation process; 7. The restoration of a Mk 51 Director gets underway; 8. The passageway outside the Supply Offices freshly painted, cleaned, and ready for guests.

According to Ken Rittenmeyer, volunteer coordinator of the Wednesday Gang, 12 to 15 volunteers show up to the Showboat every Wednesday morning prepared to accomplish tasks ranging from painting decks, bulkheads, and deck fittings, to reupholstering chairs, replacing plexiglas covers on turret sighting hoods, and restoring speakers that make up the ship’s 1MC system. The list of projects, completed and planned, focuses principally on maintenance and preservation both inside and outside the ship and seems to be endless.

With a ship the size and complexity of *North Carolina*, it takes an enormous amount of coordination with ship staff and other volunteers who take note of current needs as well as possible future projects and efforts. One such volunteer is Richard Johnson who, Rittenmeyer said, is on the ship most days and “whose awareness of what’s going on and what needs to be done is invaluable.”

One of the most significant efforts of the Wednesday Gang was during the last few months of 2021 when they were called upon to prepare the main deck on the starboard side of the ship for visitors since portions of the port side would be closed due to the work being done on the foremast and superstructure. Rittenmeyer noted that since a large portion of the starboard side was normally closed to the public, a major clean-up and preservation effort was executed with every member of the Wednesday Gang contributing over the four months it took to complete the project.

The other group of volunteers keeping the Showboat in picture-perfect condition is the Cleaning Crew. Meeting mainly on Thursday, with an occasional Friday thrown into the mix, the efforts by this cadre of about ten volunteers are probably more notable for what is not seen as a result of their toils.

Coordinated by volunteers David Holloway and Jay Eipper, the group prepares Battleship *North Carolina* for a weekend full of visitors. That means making sure discarded items like ship maps or empty water bottles have not accumulated in passageways or ladderwells; making sure lost admission stickers are peeled off bulkhead and decks; wiping fingerprints and forehead smears from Plexiglas; and ensuring the public tour route is clear of obstructions and possible safety hazards.

Walking around the ship it becomes unmistakably clear that the hundreds of volunteer hours spent by the Wednesday Gang and the Cleaning Crew help preserve the legacy of the Battleship *North Carolina* by providing visitors a venue that honors the ship and all the men who served aboard her.

After a recent visit to the Showboat, a visitor noted, "Clean, well maintained, friendly staff and just an overall nice experience." Clear evidence of the impact the volunteers have on the thousands of people who visit Battleship *North Carolina* throughout the year.

Bravo Zulu to the Wednesday Gang and Thursday Cleaning Crew!

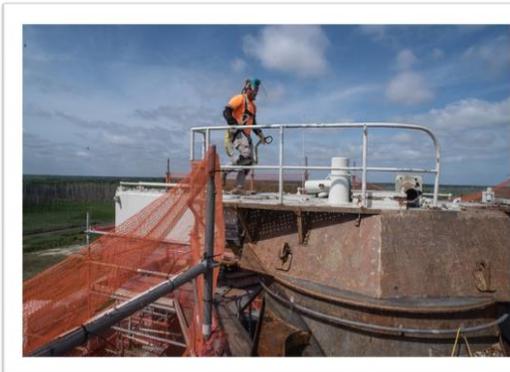
Honoring the Legacy –

Over the past several months, board member Alex Dydula has worked on behalf of the Friends of the Battleship *North Carolina* to honor the Battleship's former crew members who are still alive by sending them a flag that has been flown over the Showboat. To date, 12 flags have been dispatched along with a certificate of authenticity and an explanation as to why a properly folded flag has 13 folds.



Former Showboat crew member William Wrape II, shows off the American flag flown over Battleship North Carolina in his honor.

Bravo Zulu to Alex for spearheading the effort!



Mast Repair Continues – Work to restore the integrity of the mast sections and platforms on the upper forward superstructure continued through the month. As the effort moves forward, plans are being made to return the foremast to its rightful place atop the Showboat later in the summer.

Photos © Alan Cradick
See more of his Battleship photos on [Flickr](#).



BATTLE★STAR COLLECTION | Own a piece of American history

This Month in Showboat History

June 13, 1940 – Less than three years after her keel had been put down, Battleship *North Carolina* was launched at New York Navy Yard. Christened by Isabel Hoey, daughter of North Carolina Governor Clyde Hoey, America's first fast battleship eased down the ways into the East River. With her commissioning in April 1941, *North Carolina* would become the first U.S. battleship to be completed in over 18 years.

Pacific Bound – Having received orders to head for the Pacific, USS *North Carolina* departed Hampton Roads on **June 5, 1942**, as what many consider to be the most significant naval battles of the war was taking place at Midway.



June 1942 - USS North Carolina at the Hampton Roads anchorage.

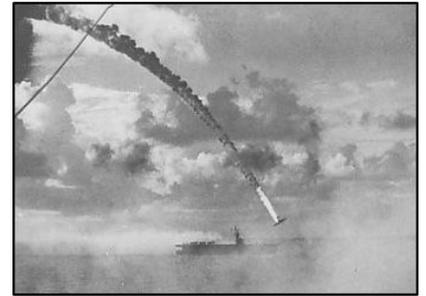
Entering the Pacific Ocean after having transited the Panama Canal **June 9-10**, the Showboat used her first several weeks in the Pacific training and preparing to bolster the American fleet in its fight against the Japanese.

Marianas Turkey Shoot – The month of **June 1944** found U.S. forces preparing for the invasion of the Marianas Islands. On **June 13**, *North Carolina*, along with the battleships *Washington* (BB 56), *South Dakota* (BB 57), *Indiana* (BB 58), *Alabama* (BB 60), *Iowa* (BB 61), and *New Jersey* (BB 62) were tasked with the bombardment

of Saipan and Tinian Islands, providing cover for minesweeping operations and preparing for amphibious forces to land during the following week.

With the invasion of Saipan well underway, attention was turned to the Japanese counter-offensive advancing from the vicinity of the Philippine Islands. On **June 19** aircraft from the U.S carriers engaged Japanese carrier-based and land-based aircraft with the opposing fleets separated by over 300 miles.

Japanese aircraft approaching the American fleet were met with a hail of anti-aircraft fire and the massive firepower of Task Force 58. Referred to by some as "The Marianas Turkey



Shoot," an after action report summed up the scene noting that "the battleships, cruisers, and destroyers ahead put up a tremendous barrage which, together with the burning planes all around the horizon, created a most awesome spectacle."

By the end of the Battle of the Philippine Sea on **June 21**, the Imperial Japanese Navy had lost three aircraft carriers, 476 aircraft, and nearly 450 aviators. U.S. forces lost 130 aircraft and 76 aviators during the three-day battle but lost no ships.

June 27, 1947 – USS *North Carolina* and her sister ship USS *Washington*, were decommissioned in a joint ceremony conducted at the Navy Supply Depot in Bayonne, New Jersey. The Showboat would remain inactive in the Reserve Fleet until stricken from the Naval Vessel Register on **June 1, 1960**.

Did You Know?

Commemorating Midway – Since 2000, **June 4** has been the date the U.S. Navy has formally commemorated the Battle of Midway. Designated in June 1999 as one of two significant dates in the Navy's history (the Navy birthday on October 13 being the other), then Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Jay Johnson proclaimed, "Twice a year, we will pause as a Navy to reflect upon our proud heritage and to build in all hands a renewed awareness of our tradition and history."



In his announcement establishing the annual commemoration, Johnson noted that the victory at Midway was achieved "not by superior numbers or daunting technology, but by the courage and tenacity of sailors who fought a vicious air and sea ballet against overwhelming odds. Their victory helped win us the world we have today, and it is appropriate that we remember it and those who participated in it."

It's Okay to be Petty – During the recent Battleship 101, one of the docents stationed within the ship to guide and inform guests was asked by a young visitor why some of the sailors were called Petty Officers, emphasizing with some concern the use of the word “petty.”

Feeling his response, “that is what they have traditionally been called,” along with an abbreviated review of the enlisted sailor rank structure, was not what the explanation the young lady was looking for, the docent, along with one of his counterparts, conducted a quick check of the term “Petty Officer” on the *Naval History and Heritage Command* website.

According to the site, “The Petty Officer can trace his title back to the old French word *petit* meaning something small. Over the years the word also came to mean minor,



secondary, and subordinate. In medieval and later England just about every village had several ‘petite’, ‘pety’ or ‘petty’ officials/officers who were subordinate to such major officials as the steward or sheriff. The petty officers were the assistants to the senior officials.

“The senior officers of the early British warships, such as the Boatswain, Gunner, and Carpenter, also had

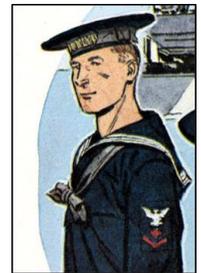
assistants or ‘mates.’ Since the early seamen knew petty officers in their home villages, they used the term to describe the minor officials aboard their ships.”

The term carried on into the U.S. Navy with ship captains appointing petty officers as assistants to the senior officers. The petty officers normally stayed in their position as long as the captain who appointed them was in command of the ship.



There was no “seniority” among petty officers until 1885 when the Navy established three classes of Petty Officer - first, second, and third. In 1893 the Chief Petty Officer rank was established to recognize the most senior and experienced enlisted sailors.

Armed with the newly minted information, the docent sought out the inquisitive visitor (and her parents) and provided her with the more complete explanation. Listening to the clarification, it was clear she was grateful to find out that the term “petty” was not being used in its more common meaning usage in describing something, or in this case someone, “of little importance” or “trivial.”



Supporting 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 (the number of guests is 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.



But 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 fund programs, acquisitions, and restoration of Battleship *North Carolina*.

To our entire Friends membership -- your continued commitment and support are greatly appreciated.

Scuttlebutt is published monthly by
 Friends of the Battleship *North Carolina* for its membership.
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