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What's Happening on the Showboat?

Annual Meeting Set – The Friends of the Battleship *North Carolina* Annual Meeting has been set for Saturday, **September 17**. The current agenda for the meeting calls for the election of new board members, an overview of the past year's activities, and a look ahead to the coming year. Any member of the Friends is eligible to attend. The meeting will start at 10 a.m. in the Battleship's Wardroom.



Former crewmember John Seagraves answers questions about his time aboard USS *North Carolina*.

Preserving the Legacy –

About 30 Showboat enthusiasts were provided a unique opportunity on July 18 to talk with a former member of the *North Carolina* crew. In an hour-long question and answer session in the Showboat's Wardroom,

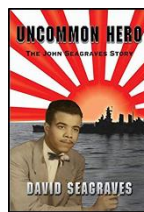
John Seagraves recounted his experiences aboard USS *North Carolina* and as an African American sailor in the segregated Navy of the 1940s.

The 96-year-old Seagraves joined USS *North Carolina* in April of 1944 and was assigned as a cook. As one of his duties, he was responsible for cooking and serving breakfast to the Executive Officer (XO), Cdr. Joe Stryker. It was through his frequent interaction with Stryker that



Seagraves is credited for convincing the XO to establish a 20mm gun crew comprised of black sailors, something that had not been done on *North Carolina* or many other ships in the Navy. Not only did Seagraves and his gun crew get trained and become an operational crew, but they were credited for shooting down a Japanese kamikaze that made a run at the Showboat on April 14, 1945.

Joining Seagraves during the session was his son David. The younger Seagraves is the author of the book, "Uncommon Hero: The John Seagraves Story". The book, available on Amazon, not only tells the story of the elder Seagraves' experiences in the Navy and onboard *North Carolina* but also describes the challenges he faced growing up in a segregated America and later as an entrepreneur.



Friends' Fireworks Celebration – Over 900 Friends of the Battleship and guests were treated to a spectacular display of fireworks on July 4. The skies were near-perfect as guests began lining up to board the Showboat. *North Carolina*'s main deck filled quickly as the evening's guests claimed their viewing spot for the City of



CBDR*

Upcoming events on *The Showboat*

6 for 60 Tours

August 6
September 3

Battleship 101

August 13

Friends of the Battleship Annual Meeting

September 17
10 a.m. Wardroom

Hidden Battleship

Limited to 40 participants
November 12

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



*Constant Bearing, Decreasing Range

Wilmington's 2022 edition of the annual pyrotechnics show. In addition to those who chose the ship as their viewing venue, many more found their preferred vantage points in Battleship Park and along the SECU Walkway.

As they waited for the main event's 9:05 start time, the crowd entertained themselves by exploring the decks of the 80-year-old battleship, socializing, and dining on a variety of holiday fare they brought to the festivities. In addition, over 100 members took advantage of an informal, special reception that was available to Friends at the Commander, Captain, and Commodore levels.

Overall, an enjoyable evening with a fresh twist to the "steel beach picnic" many former sailors may have experienced during their Navy days.



Friends Establish Business Membership – The Friends Board of Directors recently authorized the development of a Friends Membership package focused on businesses. The new membership program provides the opportunity to support Battleship *North Carolina* through the Friends organization at one of three levels; Battle Group Commander (\$500), Task Force Commander (\$1,200), and Fleet Commander (\$2,500).



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 4th event and VIP Reception.

Additional details regarding the Friends Business Membership can be found on the [Friends website](#).

Hidden Battleship Returning in November – Battleship enthusiasts may want to circle November 12 on their calendars. That's when Hidden Battleship, the popular behind-the-scenes tour of unrestored areas of the Showboat returns. Space is limited for this *adults only* program so be sure to save the date and make plans now to explore some of the Showboat's seldom-seen spaces. Details for making reservations will be provided in an upcoming edition of *Scuttlebutt* and will be posted on the Battleship website in the coming weeks.



Foremast and Yardarm Back in Place – Another project milestone in the mast repair project was met June 30 when the three sections of the foremast were returned to their place atop the forward superstructure of the Showboat.

Earlier in the week the ship's yardarm had been rigged and lifted into place.

Mast Photos © Alan Cradick
See more photos on [Flickr](#)

This Month in Showboat History

July 5, 1942 – USS *North Carolina* got underway from San Francisco after having spent 10 days in the “City by the Bay”. Sailing under the Golden Gate Bridge at 1500, the Showboat crew watched as the coast of the United States faded into the distance. It would be the last time many would see their homeland until **August 1944**, when the ship would arrive in Bremerton, Washington for an overhaul.

The Showboat’s arrival in Pearl Harbor on **July 11, 1942** provided a much-needed morale boost for the crowd who had gathered to watch America’s newest battleship move through the devastated harbor to her berth at Pier 12.

“We entered the channel at 1800 to behold a sight that we knew nothing about,” Radioman Second Class Charles Paty, Jr. would recall years later. “We entered the harbor with some apprehension.”



July 11, 1942 - USS *North Carolina* arrives Pearl Harbor.



July 17, 1942 - The mast of USS *Arizona* (BB 39) rises out of the waters of Pearl Harbor.

“As we came through the entrance channel, the crew was called to quarters. We stood at attention at quarters as we progressed around the back side of Ford Island passing the capsized hulk of the USS *Utah* (AG 16) progressing through the East Loch, the sunken body of the USS *Arizona* (BB 39).” Paty, who was a young Seaman at the time, would reminisce. “We moored at 1955 to berth B12. It was a very sobering several hours.”

The Showboat’s stay in Pearl Harbor was short, departing **July 15** to join USS *Enterprise* (CV 6), two cruisers, and eight destroyers as they headed south toward Tongatabu in the South Pacific. Shortly before noon on **July 19**, the Showboat crossed the Equator for the first time. Normally marked with a “crossing the line” ceremony, there was no celebration this first crossing due to the gravity of times.

Less than two weeks later, *North Carolina* would see her first action of the war as she escorted and protected the carriers *Enterprise*, *Saratoga* (CV 3), and *Wasp* (CV 7) in support of the invasion at Guadalcanal.

July 17, 1945 – Operating in company with the battleships *Alabama* (BB 60), *Missouri* (BB 63), *Wisconsin* (BB 64), the British battleship *King George V* (41), and several cruisers and destroyers, *North Carolina* participated in the bombardment of industrial installations at Hitachi, 90 miles northeast of Tokyo. The entire action was conducted using radar as the only observation method available for spotting the results of the firing.

In the ship’s After Action Report (#250) it was noted, “During the bombardment, spotting aircraft could not gain their stations due to bad weather. Since no observation could be made of the fall of shot, salvos on the second, third, and fourth targets were ‘walked around’ the target areas by small range and deflection changes in order to insure coverage.”

The action against the Hitachi installations saw the Showboat fire 269 high capacity, 16-inch projectiles at four different targets and marked the last time USS *North Carolina* would participate in a major shore bombardment during the war.

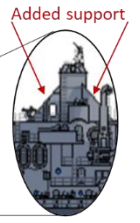
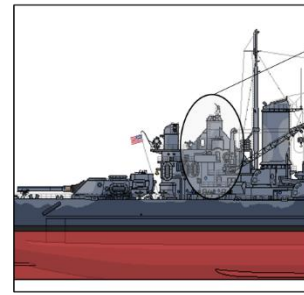
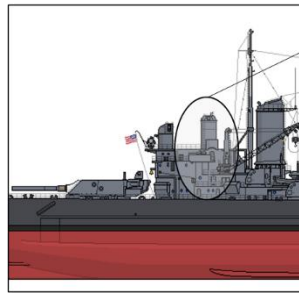


Did You Know?

The Beginning of the End – On July 16, at 5:29 a.m., approximately 24 hours before *North Carolina* commenced the bombardment of the Hitachi Industrial Area, the first atomic bomb was tested in the desert of New Mexico. Just hours after that test, USS *Indianapolis* (CA 35) departed Hunters Point Naval Shipyard in San Francisco with elements of “Little Boy,” the bomb that would be dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945.

Reducing the Shake During Shakedown – North Carolina's ability to develop a precise fire control solution and hit designated targets with its main and secondary batteries was dependent on accurate information being gathered and disseminated from the directors associated with those gun systems.

Did you know that during the Showboat's shakedown period in 1941, there was great concern about vibrations generated when the ship was at higher speeds and the effect those vibrations might have on the aft Mark 38 Main Battery Director (Spot 2). To mitigate the effect of the vibrations, large brackets were added to the director tower to help reduce any negative effect the vibrations might have on information collected at the director.



Illustrations via
Shipbucket.com

Supporting the Showboat

Living with Water – The Battleship site now experiences sunny-day flooding during most high tides. Add to that the impact of storms and other weather-related events and the need for the Living with Water project becomes evident.

Current plans call for the restoration of more than 800 feet (approximately 1/5 of an acre) of hardened shoreline with an intertidal estuarine living shoreline. Additionally, the approximately 2-acre flood-prone area of the Battleship's back parking lot will be restored to a wetland habitat.

Living shorelines and wetlands help protect communities as well as fish and wildlife by buffering the effects of coastal storm surges, tidal flooding, and stormwater runoff. They protect community assets, local economies, and historic and cultural values. They also provide educational opportunities through contributions to science and the transferability of resiliency concepts.



[Click here](#) to learn more about the Living with Water project.

[Click here](#) to donate to Living with Water through the Generations Campaign



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Living with Water

AmazonSmile – Even though Amazon Prime days have passed you can still shop Amazon and make contributions to the Friends through the AmazonSmile program. [Find out how.](#)

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