



January 2021

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D O N A T E

What's Happening on the Showboat?

What Makes the Showboat Tick? - There's still time to sign up for sessions of the *Meet the Showboat* presentation series. Upcoming offerings include a look at how *North Carolina* was designed and engineered, what it took to fire the massive 16-inch guns, a discussion about the Marines who served aboard the Showboat, and a presentation about the ships that have been named *North Carolina*. The knowledge you gain by participating in these sessions is sure to enhance your next visit to the Showboat.



Go to the [Meet the Showboat](http://www.battleshipnc.com/meet-the-showboat/) webpage at <http://www.battleshipnc.com/meet-the-showboat/> to find out more and to register for any of the remaining sessions.

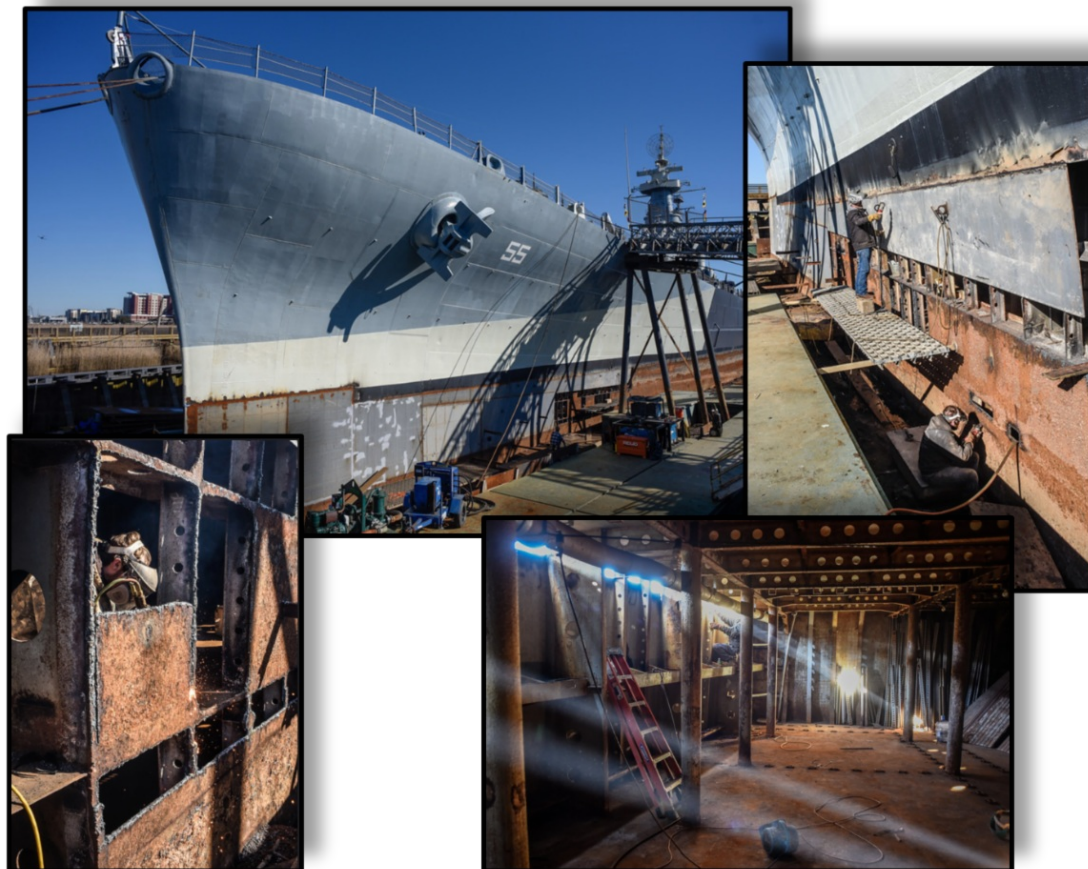


Discover the Showboat - Another program aimed at providing a greater understanding of Battleship *North Carolina* and the sailors who served aboard her is the new video series, *Discover the Showboat: A City at Sea*. Created and produced by Kim Sincox, the Showboat's Museum Services Director, the collection of videos will explore various areas of the ship through pictures and documents, and through "the stories of the young men who called *North Carolina* home."

The first video of the collection, all about the Showboat's Butcher Shop, has been posted and is presented by Battleship volunteer Lori Spencer. You can access [Discover the Showboat](http://www.battleshipnc.com/discover-the-showboat/) at <http://www.battleshipnc.com/discover-the-showboat/>

And don't forget, the first two episodes of [The Showboat Podcast](http://www.battleshipnc.com/the-showboat-podcast/) are available at <http://www.battleshipnc.com/the-showboat-podcast/>.

Hull Repairs Continue



Photos Copyright Alan Cradick

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This Month in Showboat History

During the final week of **January 1944**, USS *North Carolina*, together with the other ships and aircraft assigned to Task Force 58, participated in the bombardment and invasion of the Marshall Islands. During the 24-hour period from **29-30 January**, the Showboat pummeled the small Kwajalein islands of Roi and Namur with a total of 360 rounds of 16-inch and 2,353 rounds of 5-inch ammunition.

Destruction of not only the Japanese airfields but also the aircraft and ships that had been operating from the group of small islands, made way for the 4th Marine Division and the Army's 7th Infantry Division to make successful landings in early February.

North Carolina was also credited for sinking the Japanese freighter *Eiko Maru* during the encounter.



Jan 30, 1944 - One of USS *North Carolina*'s 5-inch battery control crews gather at Sky Control after completing 22 hours of bombardment of Kwajalein Atoll.



Operations in the South China Sea were the focus of Admiral "Bull" Halsey and Task Force 38 during **January of 1945**. Looking to neutralize the Japanese Navy that had been largely unchallenged in the region for the preceding three years, Halsey also believed he could aid General Douglas MacArthur's effort on the west coast of the Philippine island of Luzon by drawing the Japanese to defend against the task force rather than against MacArthur's landing forces.

On **January 7**, Admiral Halsey broadcast the following message to the units assigned to the task

January 1945 - The battleships *Washington*, *North Carolina*, and *South Dakota* steam with other units of TF 38 in the South China Sea.

force as they began their operations in the South China Sea:

"Luzon is now a bloody battleground. The enemy is now fighting to the death to stop our expeditionary forces and troops. Many of our ships have been hit hard in the past two days. Every undestroyed enemy plane is potential death to many of our comrades. This is the time for great effort. Give the best and God bless you."

Though weather hampered many of the plans Halsey had envisioned, the Americans did have limited success off the west coast of Luzon with the task force being responsible for the sinking of a Japanese cruiser, 44 merchant ships, including 12 oil tankers, and the destruction of over 100 Japanese aircraft.

Did You Know?

When "Close" is "Close Enough" -- One of the most significant hardware advancements of the war was the development of the proximity fuze. Developed by a team of scientists, engineers, and ordnance experts at the then newly established Applied Physics Laboratory at Johns



Watch a short APL video about development of the proximity fuze by clicking on the image above.

Hopkins University, the ambiguously named "variable time fuze" brought together a radio transmitter and receiver tucked away in the nose of a projectile that would emit a signal, sense its return (similar to radar) and then, once the strength of the return signal achieved a designated level, detonate the warhead. The shrapnel generated from the exploding shell, coupled with the proximity of the target aircraft to the detonation, would result in the integrity of the airframe being compromised and the aircraft being either disabled or destroyed.

With the first operational use of the proximity fuze by USS *Helena* (CL-50) at Guadalcanal in January 1943, American forces gained a huge advantage in defending

against Japanese air attacks with the new fuze.

In a September 2020 *Military History* magazine article, author Michael Robbins noted that the proximity fuze added such efficacy that Japanese attackers had a hard time figuring out how the accuracy of American naval guns suddenly became so accurate and deadly.

"Some naval historians believe the Japanese resorted to kamikaze attacks by inexperienced airmen in part due to dire losses of seasoned aircrew to American AA fire," wrote Robbins. "Not that the kamikazes were immune to VT-fuzed shells."

The proximity fuze was such a significant development that great pains were taken to maintain the secrecy surrounding it. In fact, fear that a recovered dud would give away the fuze's secret, the fuze was not used outside the Pacific theater of operations until the summer of 1944, first fired from coastal artillery along the English Channel in defense against German V-1 "Buzz bombs" launched at London, then later in December where the fuze was used for the first time in ground combat during the Battle of the Bulge

Talk Like a Sailor



"Bull" Ensign - Designation given to the senior Ensign onboard a ship who was charged with various wardroom duties including setting up the wardroom's movie night. The moniker is believed to have originated during World War II from Admiral "Bull" Halsey's need to designate one officer to oversee wardroom functions.

The Bull was also often responsible for mentoring the junior-most Ensign, or **"George" Ensign** (also spelled "JORG" for Junior Officer Requiring Guidance.)

Gundeck - To falsify or misrepresent actions in records or reports. Where the term originated is

not clear. Some believe it to come from the days of sail when ships would sometimes paint black squares along the hull to represent more gun ports than they actually had. Others believe the term refers to midshipmen improperly completing their celestial navigation assignments while on the ship's gundeck, and basing ship's position on dead reckoning courses and speeds rather than being derived from new celestial observations.

Every
Thursday
is



Show your support.
Wear your
"Showboat" gear.

Supporting the Showboat

Donating to Friends - The Friends of the Battleship *North Carolina* are proud to support the Museum Department with funding to assist, promote, and perpetuate educational and restoration efforts on the Showboat.

Some of the projects funded by the Friends in the past include:

- Restoration of the ship's forward bell
- Reinterpretation of Ship's Store #2
- Legacy of the North Carolina Exhibit Gallery in the visitor's center
- Reinterpretation of Turret #2 gun house
- Restoration of the 26-foot Motor Whaleboat
- Restoration and furnishing replacement on the bridge
- Custom models of the ships named *North Carolina*
- Acquisition and conservation of an 1827 painting of the Ship-of-the-Line *North Carolina*

We ask that you consider making a donation to Friends.

D O N A T E

AmazonSmile - The holidays may be over, but if you continue to shop on Amazon, you can still designate the Friends of the Battleship *North Carolina* as the recipient of an AmazonSmile donation at no cost to you. Find out how by clicking below.



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 more guests with you when you visit. Visit the [Friends Renewal](#) page for details.

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