Where History Comes Alive

BATTLESHIP NORTH CAROLINA

Scuttlebutt

August 2009

Friends of the Battleship Purchase 1827 Painting

On the morning of May 7, the Battleship successfully bid on an original 1827 ink and watercolor painting of the Ship-of-the-Line NORTH CAROLINA. It was painted by noted maritime artist, Nicholas Cammillieri (of Malta, 1798-1856) whose paintings of the USS CONSTITUTION and CONSTELLATION are in the US Naval Academy Collection. The painting is in excellent condition and in 1975 it was treated by renowned conservator Christa Gedhde, a pioneer in paper conservation. The Friends of the Battleship provided the funds for the purchase.

The painting depicts the ship in a Mediterranean storm experiencing problems with her sails. The foreground features the storm-tossed ship and in the background are the soaring cliffs (1427 feet) of the Tunisian island of Zembra. In gold script on at the bottom of the painting, the artist wrote:

The U.S. Ship North Carolina/ Under a press of sail weathering the Isle of Zembra, on the 28th of December 1826, in a sudden gale from N.N.W. Represented at the moment of splitting her Jib in pieces, setting her Foremast Staysail, and Brailing up her Spanker.

According to Midshipman John Goldsborough, "commenced with fresh breezes." At 2 pm the ship came to in the bay of Tunis in "six fathoms of water, 70 feet of cable/landed Dr. Heap and family under a salute of 9 guns." At sunset the midshipman noted the locations of Cape Carthage, Cape Bon and the Island of Zembra. The ship "received a salute from Galetta/returned it." At 6.30 AM the ship "weighed and made sail out of the bay of Tunis. From 8 to Meridian fresh gales and clear/stowed the anchors/got up preventer braces. At 10.30 split the Jib/ Zembra about 1 mile to leeward/hauled it down & set for topmast staysail."

This first USS NORTH CAROLINA, a 74-gun ship of the line, was launched in Philadelphia, September 1820, and fitted out in Norfolk, VA, with Master Commandant Charles W. Morgan in command. A three-masted square-rigger with an overall length of 196 feet 3 inches and beam of 54 feet, she displaced 2,633 tons and carried an initial complement of 820.

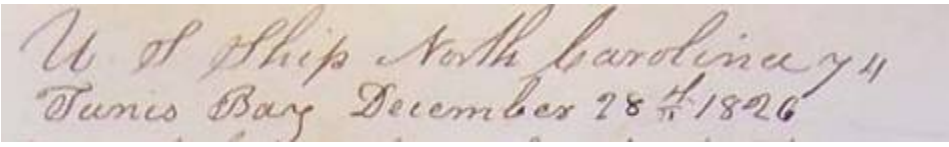
The Greek War for Independence, which erupted in 1821, was effecting American ships carrying trade in the Mediterranean. In 1824, Commodore John Rodgers was appointed command of a squadron that included the NORTH CAROLINA, CONSTITUTION, ERIE, CYANE, and ONTARIO. Rodgers' orders were to make contact with the Turks and negotiate a treaty giving America most favored trade status.

The NORTH CAROLINA left Hampton Roads, VA, in March 1825, bound for Gibraltar. It was the first American line-of-battle-ship to cross the Atlantic. The passage took 33 days in "boisterous and unpleasant weather, rough sea and without a single clear day or night," wrote Fleet Captain Daniel Patterson. Officers onboard included Matthew Perry and Samuel F. DuPont.

NORTH CAROLINA cruised throughout the Mediterranean until May 1827. Rodgers successfully located the Turkish fleet and laid the groundwork for an 1830 commercial treaty. And the presence of NORTH CAROLINA and other U.S. Navy ships reduced attacks on American shipping.

The Battleship's mission includes interpreting all ships named NORTH CAROLINA and this painting will certainly aid in this effort. A professional scan has been made of the painting. The scan will be made into large canvas banners for the exhibit hall. The original will be displayed safely from time to time.

> ***"At 10.30 split the Jib / Zembra about 1 mile to leeward / hauled it down and set for topmast staysail."***
>
> **Tunis Bay, December 28, 1826**



October Fun on the Battleship

The Battleship NORTH CAROLINA will transform in October into "Ghost Ship" with three big events.

Ghostbusters starring Bill Murray will be shown as the Fantail Family Movie on October 9th. Tickets are $1 and popcorn and soda will be available. The first 20 people to arrive wearing Halloween costumes are free!

Ghost Ship, a haunted house walk-through will run from Oct. 16th – 17th, 23rd – 24th, and 30th. Tickets are $10 and they go on sale at 6:30 pm on the night of the events. *Ghost Ship* will be open from 7 pm – 10 pm. The last ticket will be sold at 9:15 pm. *Ghost Ship* will use fog, actor volunteers, and lighting to create an eerie and fictional ship that has become lost at sea, making it a thrilling haunted house experience. Just remember, the ghosts don't care how loud you scream!

Batty Battleship's Halloween Bash, a brand-new event for families and children, will provide a safe place for little trick-or-treaters to come on board the Battleship. Some of the activities will include carnival games, crafts, storytelling, and a family-friendly haunted house on October 27th from 5:30 pm – 8:30 pm. Tickets are $5 a person.

Halloween has become such a big holiday that the Battleship staff is excited about bringing the frightfully fun aspects of the holiday to the Battleship to celebrate. For more information about any of these events, please call 910-251-5797 or email leads@battleshipnc.com.

Another Point of View on the Solomon Islands

"The war had been turned around, and it all began in the Solomons. If Midway ended forever any chance of a Japanese victory, it was the Allied seizure of Guadalcanal and the recapture of the Solomons that started Tokyo down the road to final defeat….Many contributed to this remarkable reversal...but none played a larger part than Commander Feldt's handful of Coastwatchers."

- Walter Lord

Last July I read through the ship's action reports to write an article about Battleship NORTH CAROLINA's first battle, her baptism of fire on August 24, 1942, in the Battle of the Eastern Solomons.

Recently I read about the Solomon Islands from a very different perspective, that of the Allied coast watchers in the book: *LONELY VIGIL: Coastwatchers of the Solomons* by Walter Lord, 1977, The Viking Press. Okay, it is not a recent book, but it came to my attention recently by way of my husband and the ship's Fantail Film Festival, which concluded with a favorite movie: *Father Goose*. Cary Grant, a history teacher turned beach bum, is coerced into service as a Coastwatcher due to his comprehensive knowledge of some South Pacific islands. Comedy and romance ensue. The film won an Oscar for Best Writing, Story and Screenplay.

But what about the real Coastwatchers? My husband spotted a signed copy of *Lonely Vigil* on eBay and knowing how much I enjoyed Walter Lord's *Day of Infamy* (Pearl Harbor) thought it was high time I read about the facts behind the movie.

This book documents in fascinating detail the incredible true tales of Coastwatchers, a diverse group of intrepid volunteers from all walks of life who knew and understood the islands intimately and wanted to do their part for the war effort. Their real life adventures were sensational, but their exploits and importance remained very quiet for security reasons.

Ever resourceful, Coastwatchers, hidden deep within enemy territory, enlisted the help of natives they trusted to listen, watch, and spy on the Japanese. The men set up transmitters/receivers to keep the Allies informed of the comings and goings of the Japanese in the air, on land, in the sea. They were pursued relentlessly by the Japanese, who knew of their existence via natives who sided with Japan. The Coastwatcherss survived by escaping in the jungle, relocating, and re-establishing their stations.

In addition, the Coastwatchers and natives rescued downed airmen and survivors of abandoned ships. They kept them fed and safe until they could arrange to have them returned to duty.

Thanks to the efforts of this tenacious group , the Allies were able to begin to retake the Solomon Islands beginning with the Americans landing on Vella Lavella, August 15, 1943. In this new Allied strategy to retake the Solomons, Coastwatchers served as the advance men. They charted the coasts, marked landing beaches, and pinpointed Japanese strong points. In summarizing their significance Admiral Halsey observed, "The Coastwatchers saved Guadalcanal, and Guadalcanal saved the Pacific."

By Kim Sincox, Museum Services Director

Battleship Welcomes New Promotions Director

Join us to welcome Heather Loftin to the Battleship! Heather is the Battleship's new Promotions' Director. She was born in Kernersville, NC, grew up in Charlotte, and graduated from Olympic High School in 1994. Four years later she graduated from Appalachian State University, with a degree in Communication with a concentration in Advertising and a minor in Marketing. In Wilmington she has worked with ACA Advertising and was the marketing director for MarKraft Cabinets. "I'm honored to be a part of such a wonderful memorial in our country's history. I look forward to all the experiences and stories I will learn aboard." Heather and her husband, Mark, have a 2-1/2 year old daughter.

Heather quickly placed the Battleship on "Facebook," the social networking website, so be sure to make the Battleship NORTH CAROLINA one of your favorites!

Calling All HAMS: Come Operate Aboard BB-55

Our dedicated radio volunteers from the Azalea Coast Amateur Radio Club approached us several months ago with an idea they borrowed from the USS MISSOURI. They wanted to offer fellow HAMS the opportunity to transmit from the Battleship NORTH CAROLINA's radio rooms. Thanks to their willingness to staff this program, it is a reality.

The first participants, Linda and Bruce Kopec (shown below and right) from Powder Springs, Georgia, came on Saturday, June 22nd. As entry level license users, they had only transmitted FM, which is local. Aboard the Battleship, they made their first long distance communications via HF (high frequency) making contacts with Chicago and New York State.

The Kopecs heard of the program through Wayne Melander (shown right with grandson), a club member and relative. By July 4th, five more participants had arrived and contacts included Halifax, Nova Scotia; Florida, New Hampshire, Georgia, Iowa, Connecticut, Boston, and Huntsville, Alabama.

Operating under the call of the ship, NI4BK, guests may enjoy a 2-hour appointment with a club member who will meet them at the Battleship ticket window. Operations will be on a 20-meter voice using a modern transceiver located in the ship's original main radio room. For operators who prefer CW (Morse code), transmissions will occur from the ship's main transmitter room. Operators will need to bring their own key or use the ship's straight key. Azalea Coast members will take care of all QSL cards. Appointments are free with regular paid ship admission. To make an appointment, please contact Kim Sincox, Museum Services Director: 910-251-5797 extension 3006 or museum@battleshipnc.com.

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The Azalea Coast Amateur Radio Club is very active at the Battleship. Volunteers from the club work to restore the ship's World War II transmitters. They sponsor several events annually: Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, Museum Ships Weekend, and the NC QSO Party. They participate in various ship events such as Hidden Battleship, Battleship Alive and education programs for youth. This past year the four active volunteers, Jack Jacobs, Allan Pellnat, Bill Usher and Norman Clemmons, have volunteered 418 hours. Well done!

Museum Ships Weekend June 2009

- 10 ACARC ham operators
- 578 total contacts in approximately 15 hours operating time
- Contacts: 46 states, 5 Canadian provinces, Cuba and Puerto Rico, Scotland, Northern Ireland
- 22 ships, lighthouses and/or museums participated

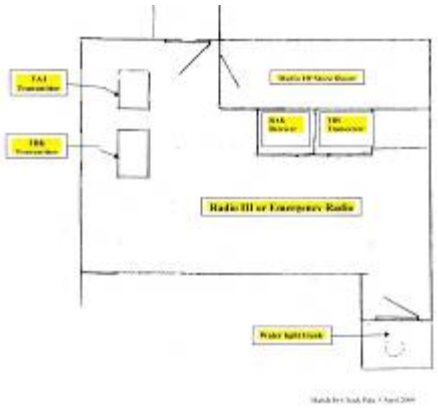
In Their Own Words *by Charles Malvern Paty, Jr.*

Editor's Note: Crewmember and Radioman Chuck Paty has written about all the radio rooms onboard the NORTH CAROLINA. The ship had eight radio compartments. Radio I or Radio Central is on the tour route. The Azalea Coast Radio Club has been restoring Radio II and they operate from both Radio I and Radio II. Our series will begin with Radio III.

Radio III

This radio compartment was designated Emergency Radio or Radio III. It is located on the second platform or four decks below the main deck. Furthermore it is located below several thick armored decks and within the side armor of the ship, meaning that it was probably one of the best protected locations on the ship. The theory was that if the ship was terribly damaged topside, this location would be able to continue communication functions when other radio locations had been knocked out.

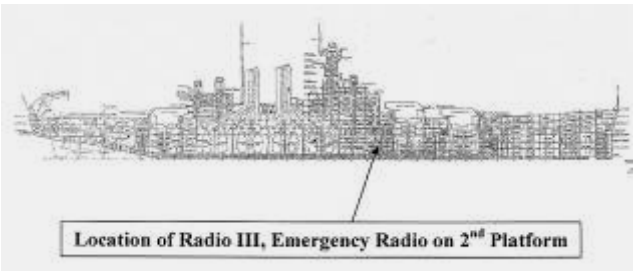
It was not manned during normal operations, but only during General Quarters. At that time usually four enlisted men would be assigned, headed by a RM1c or RM2c. Additionally one officer, a junior CR Division officer, was assigned. Equipment on hand were a TAJ-8 transmitter and a TCE transmitter. These were powerful low and medium frequency transmitters capable of transmitting many thousands of miles. Also on hand for receiving and transmitting was a TBS transceiver. The TBS (Talk Between Ships) transceiver was a VHF unit for voice communication between ships. VHF covered the 42 to 60 megacycles range which are usually not reliable for more than horizon distances so theoretically less vulnerable to enemy interception presuming there were no lurking enemy submarines nearby. There was one radio receiving position with RAK receiver at a desk with typewriter. A frequency modulator was installed, plus necessary patch boards and cables for connecting any of the equipment to any other radio locations throughout the ship. Although rather compact, Radio III was capable of performing adequately under



Radio III Deck Plan Sketch

Above: Radio III looking aft. Paty's sketch on the layout.

Right: Radio III looking forward



What's New?

New steel deck on the signal bridge and a sign about the friendly fire incident.

New interpretive signs in the 5-inch gun mount handling rooms.

26-foot motor whaleboat display opens to the public, complete with interpretive signage. Learn about the boat on the 01 level on your next visit.

Explore and Discover! Battleship NORTH CAROLINA

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Webmaster: Randy Drew

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