



Friends of the Battleship, August 2011

From the Captain's Cabin

Greetings!

As the director of the Battleship *North Carolina*, I am happy to report all is well and we are moving full speed ahead through the summer season. We are celebrating the 70th anniversary of the commissioning of the Battleship in 1941 and the 50th anniversary of the ship coming to Wilmington in 1961. With new programs and construction projects, this is a banner year indeed.

In addition, we have two exciting new initiatives that will benefit the Battleship:

FRIENDS – The Friends of the Battleship North Carolina, a life blood of volunteerism, is undergoing a major transformation. Under the leadership of Chairman John Whitley and Vice-Chairman Frank Glossl, the Friends Board and members have

grown into a powerhouse of support for the ship. They are expanding from the traditional role of supporting the museum department, to taking leadership for programming, education, and fund-raising for the upcoming hull repair project. With their time and talent, the Friends have proven that they know how to get the job done. And they provide great social support for each other along the way. Bravo Zulu! Thinking about joining up? Contact the Friends at friends@battleshipnc.com.

DEVELOPMENT – Every successful museum, historic or heritage site in the country has a development organization to build strategic relationships, develop capital campaigns, and provide educational programming. All of us have a need to give back to our community. A

development program is an important way to guide our efforts. We face a major hull repair project in 2014 (in addition to the work being done on the hull this year), and we need to expand our education programming. To this end, the Battleship Commission has brought on board Mary Beth Bankson and a private company, Capital Development Services, to lead our efforts. Mary Beth serves as the Battleship's liaison with the company.

The Battleship serves as a memorial, a tourist attraction and a center of education. A managed development program is important for us to support our mission and to grow. If you would like to learn more, please contact Mary Beth at mary.bankson@ncdcr.gov.

Capt. Terry Bragg, USN (Ret)



Huzzah! Friends Board Members Pledge Support

Friends Board Chair John Whitley has announced that the Board of Directors has committed initial gifts of \$10,000 to future repairs of the ship's hull and educational programs enabled by a capital campaign. Whitley says, "I am gratified beyond measure to be associated with a Board so eager to

make pledges. It is a real testimony to their commitment to the ship." Thanks to all Friends members who donate time and financial support to the Battleship!

Join the Friends today! Log onto www.battleshipnc.com and click on "Friends."



We Want You for the Friends Board!



Imagine yourself on the Friends of the Battleship Board of Directors. In the 50 years that the ship has been berthed at Wilmington, there is no more exciting time to be involved with the ship than now. The Friends of the Battleship is playing a major role in the ship's current capital campaign. More importantly, the Friends of the Battleship is transforming itself into a major fund raising organization that will sustain the present and future capital needs of the Battleship Memorial.

Ideal candidates for the

Board should be able to work and support a team based approach for fundraising and support for the ship. Individuals with a strong accounting background are encouraged to become candidates. Candidates are also needed with strong organizational and planning skills that would be able to lead or support fundraising, membership, and program development teams. Candidates that become Board Members should expect to attend monthly meetings on the Battleship and to spend up to 100 volunteer hours each

year. Terms are for a two year period.

If you enjoy working with dedicated people, if you have a desire to roll up your sleeves and get involved, if you love this ship, we would love to consider you for the Board of Directors. The 2011-2012 Board of Directors will be elected at the annual meeting in the fall. For additional information, please contact Friends of the Battleship at friends@battleshipnc.com.

John C. Whitley III
Chair, Friends of the Battleship

"PPD IS
DELIGHTED TO BE
A MEMBER OF
THE BATTLESHIP
NORTH
CAROLINA."

Become a Corporate Supporter

PPD, Inc., a global contract research organization helping its clients develop life-changing medicines, has its corporate headquarters just across the Cape Fear River from the Battleship NORTH CAROLINA. PPD supports the Friends of the Battleship with a membership at the Admiral level, which includes use of

the ship for a special event. For its event, PPD reserved the Captain's cabin for a guest reception and was given a special sunset tour of the fire control tower and the combat information center. "Our guests were very impressed with their time aboard ship," said Meg Davenport, a PPD executive di-

rector. "PPD is delighted to be a member of Friends of the Battleship NORTH CAROLINA and to join with community-spirited citizens, businesses and organizations to help support this wonderful memorial to our veterans, who made tremendous sacrifices to preserve our freedom."

Give Appreciated Assets

Gifts of assets that have gone up in value since their purchase are particularly attractive to the donor. One of the ship's dedicated volunteers recently gave a gift of stock to the ship. He said, "For a person with an unrealized capital gain, there is no better way to support the ship. The donor receives a tax donation without having any capital gains tax consequences. It is the perfect gift!"

Facts: Sales of stocks, bonds, mutual funds, and real property that have appreciated in value generate a taxable capital gain.

Gifts of appreciated assets are deductible at their full fair market value if they have been held longer than twelve months.

The full fair market value of these assets can be deducted up to thirty (30%) of the donor's adjusted gross income. The donor may elect to qualify for a fifty percent (50%)

adjusted gross income ceiling by reducing the value of the gift by the full amount of its appreciation, deducting only what was originally paid for the asset.

Excess deductions can be carried forward into as many as five additional tax years.

If you are interested in learning more about giving to the ship, contact

Mary Beth Bankson
(910) 251-5797 x 3018
mary.bankson@ncdcr.gov

Fair Winds and Following Seas to Capt. Ben Ward Blee

The Battleship lost a longtime, faithful friend and champion when Captain Ben Ward Blee, U.S. Navy (Ret.), age 90, died on March 3, 2011, in Fuquay-Varina, NC, after a brief illness.

Born and raised in Santa Ana, Calif., Captain Blee graduated from The George Washington University, Washington, D.C. He was a career naval officer and retired in 1967 after 27 years of service. He spent most of World War II in the Pacific, first in the cruiser *Pensacola* and later in the *North Carolina*, seeing action in most of the campaigns and major naval engagements of the war against Japan.

Following World War II, his naval career alternated between line billets at sea and staff intelligence positions ashore. He commanded three ships, served as an intelligence officer on the staffs of all three U.S. Navy area commanders-in-chief, was aide and executive assistant to NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic, and was U.S. Naval Attaché in Singapore and Malaysia. For his final Navy tour (1965-67), during the Vietnam War, he was Fleet Intelligence Officer, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

His association with present-day Battleship *North Carolina* began as follows:

My interest in preserving the history of the *North Carolina* stems primarily, of course, from my own personal association with her during World War II. This began with her dramatic arrival at Pearl Harbor in July, 1942, a time when our Pacific fleet desperately needed help to stem

the Japanese offensive.

I was then a Lt(jg) in the heavy cruiser, *Pensacola*, in port at Pearl. Along with other ships of our fleet, the *Pensacola* had been at sea most of the eight months since the Pearl Harbor attack.



Our crews were exhausted, our ships badly in need of upkeep and repair, and we were greatly outnumbered by the Japanese. We had socked it to them hard in the Battles of the Coral Sea and Midway, but they kept coming. The arrival of this powerful new battlewagon was a godsend, and this explains how I fell in love with her.

Shortly after her arrival at Pearl, the *North Carolina* sailed with the *Pensacola* in a task force bound for the South Pacific. There we operated together for the first five weeks of the Guadalcanal campaign, and believe me, it was a great comfort to see those 16-inch guns steaming along beside us. The euphoria abruptly ended, however, on September 15, 1942, when I witnessed the torpedoing of my *Goliath*. That, coupled with the loss of the *Wasp* in the same action,

add up to a terrible shock, but it left an even softer spot in my heart for the Showboat [*North Carolina*].

Later in the war, at my own request, I was ordered to duty in the *North Carolina*. I reported aboard April 6, 1944, and served in that ship until early July, 1945. It was during this period, which included the assaults on the Marianas, Iwo Jima and Okinawa, plus carrier raids against the Japanese main islands, that the ship experienced most of her World War II combat.

Throughout this tour, I was the Combat Intelligence Officer and Assistant Officer in Charge of the Combat Information Center.

These duties made me privy to most of the details of the ship's operational experience, which we'd call today its war history.

My next association with the *North Carolina* was not until 23 years later, in 1968, when I moved my family to Jacksonville, NC, following my retirement from the Navy. While getting settled in my new surrounding and starting my second career (life insurance), I could hardly wait to visit my old ship at Wilmington, where it had been berthed six years earlier to begin its present role as a state war memorial and tourist attraction.

I reacted to my first visit with mixed emotions. I was deeply grateful, of course, that the ship has been saved. I was pleased to see how well she was being maintained. I was thrilled by the dramatic

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Captain Blee continued

physical layout of her berth, directly across the river from downtown Wilmington.



On the other hand, I was astonished to find how inadequately the ship was interpreted to the visiting public. Visitors kept asking, "What did this ship do in the war?" The only serious attempt to tell the ship's story was through the Sound the Light Show, "The Immortal Showboat," never part of the tour. [And not very good history according to Blee.]

The wardroom 'museum,' aside from the honor roll of war dead, was less meaningful from a historical standpoint, offering little in the way of interpretation of the ship. I wish the wardroom, or at least a part of it, had been left as it was when it was my home. In any case, I was deeply disturbed by these shortcomings and felt that the ship and her crew deserved better, however, I was not in a position to change things until 1973 when I began my first term as Chairman of the Battleship Commission."

Captain Blee did instigate change during his years of association with the Battleship. His roster of accomplishments includes the following:

1973-1977—First term as Chairman of the Battleship Commission

1973—Established a repository of BB55 archives and oral histories with East Carolina University, Greenville, NC, which would later be moved to the Battleship

1973-74—Established a BB55 still photograph collection using 2-3 dozen personal photograph and a couple hundred selected from the National Archives

1974-75—Produced an exhibit providing an overview of the ship's combat history

1976-78—Produced the television documentary *Showboat: A Battleship at War*

1982—Wrote the book *Battleship NORTH CAROLINA*

1984-1990—Second term as Chairman of the Battleship Commission

2005—Wrote the second and much expanded edition of *Battleship NORTH CAROLINA* (shown left)

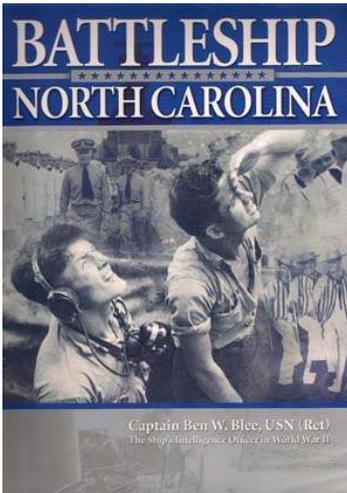
2010—Made inaugural donation to the upcoming capital campaign

Captain Blee's accomplishments for the Battleship are astonishing. In addition, he truly established the foundation of the ship's archive and

oral history collection. He assembled and donated many photographs, artifacts, and incredible archival materials collected from officers and crew members. The Museum Department uses these treasures in exhibits, interpretive panels on the tour route, educational programming, newspaper articles, advertising, and make them available to researchers.

Blee was determined that the story of this great ship be told to the visiting public and did all in his power to carry out this purpose. He surely must have been pleased to know how much he contributed to his beloved North Carolina. He remained in touch with the ship and as soon as he heard about the in-place hull repair project, he showed his strong support by contributing the inaugural gift to the capital campaign, a fitting gesture by one of her officers and twice chairman of the Battleship Commission.

We salute the service of Captain Ben Ward Blee to his country and aboard this fine vessel during the war and subsequent leadership and dedication to the preservation and telling of her history. Our gratitude is deep and abiding.



In 1986, Blee organized a joint reunion of the BB55 crew and four men of the Japanese submarine I-19. Blee's research revealed that the I-19 was the probable submarine whose lucky (not aimed at the Battleship) torpedo hit BB55 on 15 September 1942.

Battleship Mess, Galley and Rations

For most of its early history, the U.S. Navy provided sailors at sea and on land enough food—at no cost to the sailors – to ensure that they could carry out their assigned tasks. If that food happened to be tasty and appealing, and sailors looked forward to three hot meals to break up their day, it was entirely by chance. Since World War I, however, the navy has taken pains to make sure that its chow is varied, nutritious, and interesting—for the sake of morale as well as efficiency.

In the mid-1930s, about the time construction of the *North Carolina* was authorized, Congress passed a law that embraced advances in the understanding of nutrition, refrigeration, and safe food handling. The act also took into account the logistics of supply, caloric value, and the need for fresh vegetables, dairy products, and meat.

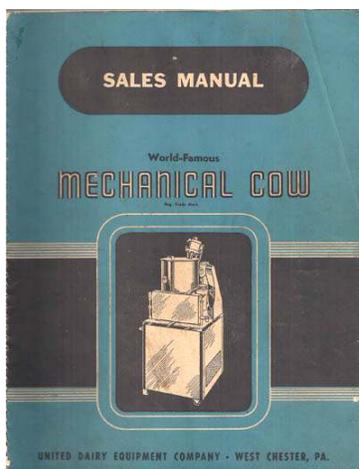
Before the act, the biggest concern was how long food would last before it became unusable. Nearly everything was dried, salted, and preserved in ways that forfeited flavor and often nutritional value.

After Congress acted, naval architecture included refrigeration, automatic dishwashers, and all sorts of labor-saving devices such as potato peeling machines, bread dough mixers, and even ice cream makers. The “World Famous” Mechanical Cow created milk from butter, skim-milk power and water. It was located on the Battleship’s second deck.

Space was designed with the novel idea of serving all hands three meals a day cafeteria style in a central mess hall. In contrast, in the old navy rations were centrally prepared and then brought to the men in the areas where they were berthed. Alternatively, the sailors could take their food on deck or to any place where they could find a place to sit.

By the time the *North Carolina* was commissioned in 1941, Americans had become accustomed to far better and fresher food than earlier generations. The food industry was already one of the largest in the country. Canned, frozen and easy-to-prepare foods, as well as fresh baked goods, dairy, fruits, vegetables and meat products filled the shelves of grocery stores such as Kroger, Piggly Wiggly, Winn-Dixie and the A&P.

[The Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company dates to 1869.] Young sailors entering the service had an expectation that they were entitled to food at least as good as they got at home.



Starting about 1904, the U.S. Navy compiled cook books that included recipes for common, everyday dishes that could be easily prepared on a vast scale, with provisions readily available to galleys on land and sea. The cook books were updated regularly to reflect the best methods of food preparation for nutritious and well-balanced diets.

In 1941, the Battleship had a complement of 85 officers and 1,900 men. About 40 of them were qualified or rated as cooks or bakers. Accompanying them was the *Cook Book of the United States Navy*. Today you will find that most of the menus and dishes are more or less familiar. What you will also notice is that there were far more fatty foods, red meats, starches, and carbohydrates than we are accustomed to today. The cook book advised that a diet of 3,500 to 4,500 calories a day was necessary for the hard-working sailor, even if his ration was laden with cholesterol and trans fats.

Sailors could buy candy bars or get a chocolate sundae at the soda fountain. [In December 1944, plain ice cream and sundaes cost 10 cents and cold drinks cost a nickel.] Potato chips and pizza were unheard of, so no gratuitous calories there. While they could not get a cold beer or any other alcohol (forbidden on U.S. Navy ships since the 1860s), they could buy all the cigarettes they wanted and smoke them in authorized spaces whenever the smoking lamp was lit.

BEAN SOUP WITH SALT PORK FOR 100 MEN

Soak 5 gallons of beans in fresh water and 80 gallons of salt pork in fresh or salt water overnight. Put the beans in a copper pot and let them come to boil, then add 15# of the pork. Continue boiling until the pork is tender, then remove. In a separate copper boil the rest of the pork until tender. Cut 6# of stale bread, brown it on a pan in the over and add to the soup.

U.S. Navy, 1904



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Battleship Mess continued

Food preparation on the *North Carolina*, especially in war zones, was a job with no beginning or end. Somebody was always on watch or had other duties every minute of the day. The galley made sandwiches for these crew members and coffee was always available. The routine of food preparation began with the bread bakers at four in the morning. Then the grill cooks started breakfast, with some men serving it, and others cleaning up in the scullery. Butchers carved frozen sides of beef, pork or lamb that were kept in refrigerated

compartments. Bakers baked hundred of pies, cakes, doughnuts and other desserts. Other men prepared salads and fresh vegetables, filled water pitchers, set up tables, swabbed the decks, cleaned every possible surface, and performed dozens of other tasks. When everyone was fed the process started all over again.

Many sailors during this period wrote down their recollections of life on board. Nobody overlooked the food. Many detested it, many thought it was good as possible under the circumstances,

and many had never eaten so well in their lives and have fond memories. It may be because of this that some products and meals of that era perversely continue to be popular, like hash and canned corned beef—long after rationing restrictions disappeared. What nobody who served in any service branch recalls fondly were dried or frozen eggs, no matter how well they were disguised. Four years of war and billions of dollars never resolved this problem to anyone's satisfaction.

Michael Hosick



Museum Ships Weekend

The Azalea Coast Amateur Radio Club's (ACARC) activities on board the Battleship for Museum Ships Weekend on June 4th and 5th was a complete success. We put "The Showboat" on the amateur bands for 692 contacts in 45 States—Hawaii, Alaska, Montana, Idaho and South Dakota must not have had their ears on. We also had contacts from 25 DX (outside the U.S.) entities, including the UK, France, Spain, Germany, Portugal, The Ukraine, and four Canadian Provinces.

A troop of kids and parents from Roger Bacon Academy in Leland, NC, participated. Club members had made several presentations on various aspects of ham radio to a tech exam class conducted by Bill—W2NG—and administered the exam. Four "new"

hams operated HF (high frequency) from the Battleship and made their share of contacts.

Of the 692 contacts, all but 88 were made on 20M (meter) SSB (single side band). Band conditions on 40M (meter) were difficult, both for CW (continuous wave) (15 contacts from the TBM-4 model radios) and SSB (30 contacts—all "pick and shovel work"). Some 43 contacts on 17, 15, and 10 meters were subject to pervasive and severe fading.

The workhorses of the event were the guys who worked the 604 contacts on 20M SSB, handling the pileups from all hams trying to contact "The Showboat." These guys were continuously busy from picking up the microphone in the morning to laying it down in the late after-

noon on both days.

We contacted 22 of the participating ships and other "museum" entities.

Thanks to all who participated—Jack--WD4OIN--Allan--KX2H--Norm--K14YSY--Jeff--K14JDE--Jay--N3QH--Ed--W3NZ--Jake--KQ4TG--Bob--WA3IRG--Mike--N4LPH."

73 Bill (*Bill Usher*)

Note: ACARC started a partnership with the Battleship in 2000. They started restoring the TBM-4 Transmitter followed by the TDE Transmitter, Receivers, 1MC Intercom System and telephone system. They are currently working on another TBM-4 Transmitter. Club members participate in Hidden Battleship programming each year.



THE CLUB AND THE BATTLESHIP HAVE A GUEST OPERATOR STATION FOR VISITING HAMS. CONTACT THE CLUB OR THE SHIP FOR MORE DETAILS.

Collections Highlight

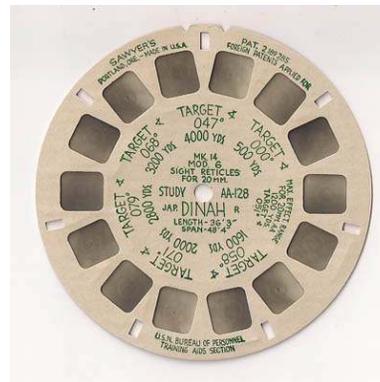
The Gunnery Department used charts, books, models, and films to teach the men to identify planes and ships. Picture reels marked “AA Range Estimation” and “Ship to Ship” were part of the Battleship’s original equipment. The study reel features one plane shown in different attitude and ranges so the viewer learned both recognition and range. The test reel has seven different planes shown in a different attitude and range. The reels depict a variety of Japanese and U.S. Navy planes. “They didn’t want you shooting your own planes down,” recalled Paul Wieser, Boatswain’s Mate 2/c.

The Bureau of Aeronautics, Special Devices Division issued the training aids. The unique division was the brainchild of Commander Luis de Florez, USN. In 1941, he championed the use of “synthetic training devices” for plane identification and gunnery. In 1943, *Life* magazine published an article about Florez and his special devices which included items as “simple as a deck of playing cards that feature war-planes in different flight positions.” His division built hundreds of devices for the army and navy in order “to breed fighting experience into a man by synthetic training” such as tracking enemy planes on a movie screen

from a fabricated gunner’s turret. Today the military uses simulators for readiness training and Florez’s Special Devices Division is The Naval Air Warfare Center Training Systems Division.

The picture reel design may seem familiar. William Gruber and Harold Graves introduced “View Master” at the New York World’s Fair in 1939. Stereoscopes were not new but Gruber updated them with the newly available Kodachrome 16mm color film. Graves had long produced photographic postcards for Sawyer’s Photo Services in Portland, Oregon. Their first picture reels featured Carlsbad Caverns and the Grand Canyon.

In WWII the military saw the potential for using the View Master for personnel training, especially for aircraft and ship identification and anti-aircraft range estimation. There are 14 images on each of the discs but seven pairs make up the stereoscopic views. Each disc fit into a round black plastic or Bakelite hand held viewer that opened like a clamshell. *Life* magazine was absolutely correct when it exclaimed that “the genius in the contraptions that emerge from [Florez’s] laboratory lie in the way his staff adapts seeming toys to authentic training uses.”



Above: Study AA-128, Mk. 14 Mod 6 Sight Reticles for 20MM / Japanese ship DINAH (Mitsubishi Ki-46).
Right: Test AA-32, Mk. 14 Mod 7&8 Sight Reticles for use with 1.1" and 40MM. AA



Join Us for Special Events at the Battleship



Saturday, August 13
9AM—6 PM

The Blue and Gray Navies: Two NORTH CAROLINAS – From Wood & Sail to Iron & Steam

Carolina Living History Guild members highlight the history of the USS *North Carolina* and the CSS *North Carolina* during the American Civil War. Displays will include steam engineering, ironclad ship construction, navigation, small arms of the US and CSA navies, and the “arts of the sailor.” Free with admission.

Saturday, August 13
Battleship 101

Interpreters stationed throughout the Battleship provide in-depth information and hands-on experiences. Highlighted areas will include the Kingfisher, galley, sick bay, engine room, main battery plot, 5-inch gun mount, and the combat information center. Free with admission.



Saturday, September 10

Battle of the Schools

Just in time for NFL, college and high school football, it's time to see who's the best of the best! It's a battle of the drumlines, it's a battle of the cheerleaders, it's a battle of the schools. Do you think your school has what it takes to take home the Battleship 50th Anniversary Trophy? Compete at Battleship Park for the once in a lifetime opportunity to take home the bragging rights.



Sunday, October 2

Battleship's 50th Anniversary

The Battleship NORTH CAROLINA came to Wilmington, NC on October 2, 1961 and opened the public on October 12 that same year. For this day, the ship will open to the public at 1961 prices. That is 50 cents for adults and 25 cents for kids. A perfect time to remember and reflect. Bonus feature! The Battleship's Living History Crew will interpret the Battleship this day.

Friday and Saturday nights, October 14 & 15, 21 & 22, 28 & 29

Ghost Ship

7:00—10 PM

The hatches will crack open this fall with all new unique designs and scares. All who enter this truly frightful attraction will experience a new dimension of scare. Tickets are \$10 and go on sale at 6:30 pm each night. You must be in the ticket line by 9:30 pm to ensure your ticket.



Tuesday, October 25

Batty Battleship

5:30—8 PM

Bring your little ghouls and goblins to the Battleship to go trick-or-treating! Fun games, activities, food, and storytelling is all part of the Halloween fun. Tickets are \$5 per person, children 2 and under are free.

**For more information on any of these events call us!
910-251-5797 or visit www.battleshipnc.com**