



Strikes on Roi, right, and Namur, left. Note the waves breaking on the coral atoll and the chain of islands continuing in the background.

Where History Comes Alive

BATTLESHIP NORTH CAROLINA

# Scuttlebutt

January 2009

## Roi-Namur, 29-30 January 1944, Remembered

After recovery of the Gilbert Islands in November and December, 1943, the Marshall Islands were next in the island-hopping campaign, which included the Kwajalein Atoll. The Battleship bombarded Roi-Namur on the evening of January 29 and through the early hours of the 30th. Battleships ALABAMA and SOUTH DAKOTA joined NC and continued bombarding during the day. The following recollections are from the Museum Dept. research files.

...Another incident that was of interest to me was the night before the carrier air attack on the two islands of Roi and Namur which were the northern islands of the Kwajalein group. We got a dispatch about four o'clock in the afternoon from Spruance's flagship telling the NORTH CAROLINA to proceed independently to the north of

these two islands. We were to leave the carrier group completely. We were to spend the night just lobbing shells in on these two islands to keep the Japanese from getting a good night's sleep before we hit them in the morning.

We got in there about dark and saw a small ship [EIKO MARU, a freighter] anchored to a pier in the lagoon. We opened up on her with, I think, just one turret and hit her with about the first salvo [actually, the second salvo]; and she sank. We could see that she was still above the water...I found out later that the next day they went on board that ship, and they found Japanese charts of depths and channels of every lagoon in the Pacific, which saved us months and months of surveying and hydrographic work. (See story on page 5)

I heard later that Admiral Spruance had planned this...that he wanted the NORTH CAROLINA to go there and bombard those people the night before [the troops] landed. To his horror the day before, he read the order and he said, "Where's that order for the NORTH CAROLINA to go up there?" Nobody had heard of it, so he sat down and wrote the dispatch.

We went on his good memory that night and I think we did an awful lot of good because we blew up a lot of ammunition dumps and kept [the Japanese] off balance for the night [there was real concern about the Japanese repairing the bombed air strip during the night].

Joe Stryker, Commander  
Executive Officer BB-55

(Continued on page 4)

**"Where's that order  
for the NORTH  
CAROLINA to go  
up there?"**

**Admiral Spruance**

## Join Ghost Hunters to Investigate the Battleship

The *Ghost Hunters* are coming back to the Battleship! The Battleship, Danny Bradshaw, and Captain Scheu have all appeared on an episode of the popular Sci-Fi Channel's *Ghost Hunters* show. And now, the *Ghost Hunters* are back and it's your turn to bathe in ghostly ectoplasm.

On January 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, the entire *Ghost Hunters* team - Jason Hawes, Grant Wilson, Steve Gonsalves, Dave Tongo, and Kris Williams - will be here to share with you their paranormal experiences at the Battleship and at other haunted sites. They will be joined by John Zaffis, who will do a presentation on demonology and

the new Paranormal Museum.

The highlight, however, of this special event will be when you get to go onboard the Battleship and help the *Ghost Hunters* conduct a paranormal investigation, which will include revealing their findings from the evening. The program is from 5:30 PM to 2 AM with a wrap-up in the afternoon.

This unique experience is \$265 a person and tickets are available through Ideal Events. You can purchase your tickets by going to their website (see at right). We hope to see you there...and if we don't see you, perhaps you will be the cause of their next visit to the Battleship!



Join Ghost Hunters on the Battleship in January!

To learn more and purchase tickets go to <http://www.idealEventManager.com/events.html>.

**NEWS FLASH! January 23rd is sold out!**

# Scuttlebutt January 2009

## Hidden Battleship Tours, January 24

**The tour was fantastic! I could have stayed on third deck all day and explored the ship.**

Join us on Saturday, January 24th, for a unique, behind-the-scenes tour of unrestored areas of the Battleship. The tour includes the bow, third deck, engine room #3, the fire control tower, and a special program inside the Combat Information center. The tour is designed for ages 12 and above. The four hour tour will include climbing over knee-high hatches and going up and down narrow ladders, so be prepared.

You choose between a morning

or afternoon time slot: 8:30am-12:30pm or 1:30-5:30 PM. The price includes admission to the Battleship, so you can tour the rest of the ship on your own before or after the program. Price: \$45 regular, \$35 Friends member or active duty military. Call 910-251-5797 extension 3024 or 3001 to make and pay for your reservation.

The next Hidden Battleship tour will be on Saturday, March 14th. (We only conduct these tours in the cooler months.)

A visitor who took the Hidden Battleship tour in November wrote: "I'm a mechanical engineer, so I especially liked going to the lower level of engine room 3. I could probably spend a few hours in there, following the plumbing and instrumentation, and figuring out how everything worked. It is amazing what they were able to do with 1930s technology."

Discover for yourself the behind-the-scenes areas on the Battleship!

## New Treasures for Battleship Collections

In 2008, nearly 350 items were added to the Battleship's collections. We send our thanks to the following people who generously donated items to the Battleship. \* indicates BB-55 company member

David Carpenter – containers for 1.1-inch projectiles

Ann Chalupsky – items that belonged to Richard Thorner\* (top left)

James Crosby\* – photographs documenting life on BB-55

Willie Lee Deaton Jr.\* – 1941 cachet

Robert Dibling\* – *Jane's Fighting Ships* series and books

Millie Embree-Wieser – volunteer guide shirts worn by Paul Wieser,\*her husband

Charles Emerson – 1941 cachets

Charles Foster\* - photo album, ditty bag, syrup container used on BB-55

Richard Fraser – U.S. Navy training manuals

Ann Glossl – 1941 and 1945 newspapers

Bill Hanson\* - booklet, newsletter, photos from BB-55 in 1946

Charles Jones – photos documenting life on BB-55

Tony Joyce – items from the Receiving Ship *North Carolina*, 1865, and ACR-12, 1916 (bottom left)

Carol Kelloff - photos that belonged to Joe Kelloff,\* her father

Norm Melton – reference books and 1945 Shipyard Bulletin

Ann Metheny – King pattern silverware that belonged to William Metheny,\* her husband

Carol Mikitka – log book and jewelry made by Joe Mikitka,\* her husband

Jim Morton – DVDs documenting the history of the Battleship Memorial (from the estate of Hugh Morton, his father)

Capt. Wilbert Nace, SC, USN, Ret. – King pattern silverware and pair of WWII binoculars

Charles Paty\* – reference books, photograph of ship's dance

Louis Popovich\* – WWII laundry bag

Richard Porter – ship's 1942 newsletters and menu that belonged to Robert Porter,\* his father

George Schaidt\* – blanket and bath towel used on BB-55

Daniel Schroll\* - souvenir salt/pepper shakers

Charles Smith\* - first day issue stamps

Michael Soohey – photos of the Battleship today

Dale States\* – 1941 program, newsletter and letter

Tim Strickland - *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II* book series (in honor of Marvin David Myers)

Dr. Paul Stroup Jr.\* – dental books and radio used on BB-55

Teresa Swarouth – *Showboat* cruise book that belonged to Pat Duckworth\*

Debbie Scheu - "Rosie the Riveter" doll by Madame Alexander

Charles Sullivan – letters from John Burns\* and newspaper clippings documenting the Truk rescue

Bill Taylor\* – video tapes and photos documenting the Battleship Association

Fred Velletri\* - quilt made in honor of BB-55 (center left)



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

The date was 12 January 1942. For the next several months we cruised up and down the eastern seaboard on training exercises, firing our main and secondary batteries at towed targets. We launched and recovered our OS2U float planes a number of times. Shortly, I was assigned to the CR Division [Radio Communication Division] and was told that the principal reason for my assignment was that I could type.

Within a few days we met Chief Warrant Officer Byron Phillips. Phillips was a rather heavysset Chief with many years of service. He looked a lot like Winston Churchill and had a gruff voice somewhat like Churchill. Phillips pointed to about a half dozen of us and said we were going to be assigned to a different section of the division. We would be working with a very new system, RADAR, which was top secret. We were not to discuss with anyone - fellow crewmembers, our family or strangers - anything we learned or observed about this system. This of course got our attention.

He then gave our battle station assignments to locations about the ship where radar transmitters were installed. The transmitter was a large black box approximately 3x3x5 feet with numerous dials and gauges

visible on the front. My job was to observe the gauges and, during gunfire, adjust the dials to maintain constant voltage and amperage being transmitted to the Sky 1 Director containing the scope which showed what the radar was picking up. I had no scope at my location.

Some months went by and we continued with our various training procedures. I had been assigned to Radio School aboard ship to learn Morse code and radio procedures and still did not know whether my career course would be Radar or Radio.

On 10 June 1942, the ship transited the Panama Canal and we passed through a manmade fresh water lake that was built to provide water for the locks in the canal. What was unique about this was it was the only time the ship was ever in fresh water and it actually floated a few inches deeper in the water. As we passed through the lake, we hosed down the ship from stem to stern giving her a good bath.

We were headed for Pearl Harbor and still had not fired our guns in anger at anybody or anything. But we did not have long to wait.

In August 1942, the ship was assigned to Task Force 61 which was making preparations for the invasion of Guadalcanal.

We were excited about this because of the possibility of finally seeing action. The beginning of the landings took place on 6 August, but BB55 had no active part in that. There were many air alerts, but no attacks developed against us. Finally on 24 August, things began to happen.

The day dawned clear and bright - 0626 Enterprise [CV 6] launched 20 scout bombers to scout 200 miles from NW to NE of the Task Force. At 1005 A Radio Contact Report by ENTERPRISE, "plane #5 flight 37 - 1 heavy carrier, 2 light cruisers, 1 destroyer Lat 04-40 S Long 161-15 E, course 180."

*[This enemy force appeared to be headed directly for us.]*

Contact reports continued to come in for the next several hours. Around 1330 our ship went to General Quarters and I manned my Radar Transmitter. Sitting in my small compartment, in almost total darkness, the only sound I could hear was the hum of the transmitter and the small movements of the 5-inch gun mounts on the boat deck just outside. Since there was little or no ventilation, I was getting very sleepy and found myself dropping my head and suddenly waking up.

I remembered what Warrant Officer Phillips told us when we started standing watches on these transmitters, "Anyone fall-

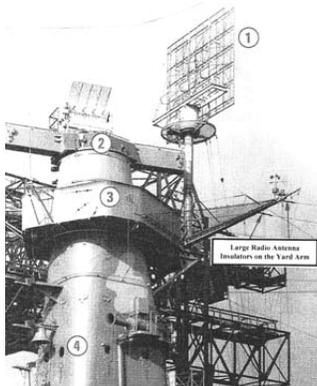
ling asleep on watch is subject to execution by firing squad!" I could imagine that message being received by my parents! During this period I decided to call the Director on my sound power phone and ask them what was going on. The word came back "Paty shut up and get off the circuit."

At 1710, a signal was received from the Task Force Commander to "stand by to repel air attack." We opened fire at 1712 with a tremendous crescendo of 5 inch, 1.1 inch and .50 cal gun fire. During this time, I was sitting or standing in front of my transmitter trying to keep the voltage steady as it jumped up and down. My heart was in my throat... "was this the end for me?" My imagination was racing. The firing ceased completely at 1720. In that short span of time, BB55 had shot down seven enemy aircraft with no material damage to our ship and, during the whole attack, we maintained a speed of 27 knots. We lost one man [George Conlon] who was killed by enemy strafing. And so ended our BAPTISM OF FIRE.

Sources for this article are Action Report #0109 Battle of Eastern Solomons, Action Report #0110 and Action Report #0122 with various attachments. Also my personal notes and diary from that period.



*I was assigned to a transmitter in a small compartment at the base of Sky 1, starboard side on the boat deck level.*





Richard Walker, left, and John Kirkpatrick, right, in Sky Control.

**...We didn't have any accurate charts of any of those islands....We had nothing modern, and we didn't know what we were doing. With these blowups that we had taken on the morning of the first strike, we could see everything perfectly on the island....**

**Richard Walker**

We had been bombarding Roi...I spotted a small house on the end of the island. Ensign Rudy Speights had "Sky 4" [the after 5-inch gun director] and 5-inch mounts 8 and 10. I asked him if he could hit that house. He tried but failed. He shot all around the place, but couldn't hit the target.

Then within an hour, we got a message from the marines ashore that we had cleaned out the Japanese trenches surrounding the 'target' and they were amazed with this wonderful display of gunnery. Only then did we learn of the presence of the trenches.

John Kirkpatrick, LCDR, Air Defense Officer

### Roi-Namur Remembered *continued*

Our particular task force went to Roi and Namur which is the northwestern end of the Kwajalein lagoon. The other half of the force went to the southern end of the island of Kwajalein.

The lagoon at Kwajalein is a beautiful lagoon. It's a hundred miles long. The Japanese had these installations at both ends, but at Roi and Namur they had one island [Roi] that consisted of nothing but an airstrip. The other [Namur] was where they had revetments with stores, torpedo warheads, bombs and so on and also their living quarters.

John Kirkpatrick and I finally persuaded Captain Frank Thomas to request from the carrier that they take photographs of these islands after the first strike from as low an altitude as possible. They did. They sent a fighter out taking oblique pictures, circling the islands at high speed. They came back with these things, took them back to the carrier, and they were developed. Then they flew them over and dropped them onto the NORTH CAROLINA.

The reason was that we didn't

have any accurate charts of any of those islands....We had nothing modern, and we didn't know what we were doing. With these blowups that we had taken on the morning of the first strike, we could see everything perfectly on the island. We could see the revetments; we could see the hangers; we could see the fuel supply; we could see the personnel quarters; we could see everything.

We took these pictures and sat down and numbered the targets— one, two, three, four, five, and so on. Then we put them on a board and gave one to each of the director operators, and the other two we took to sky control.

We were able to designate those targets by numbering and to assign a target to sky one or sky three or whatever it happened to be. They could look at this board with the picture on it and look over to the island and see exactly which end of the island it was and actually see these targets. It worked absolutely perfectly.

A very interesting thing I think was that the NORTH CAROLINA

and two destroyers [LANG and STERETT] were sent in the afternoon before the rest of the fleet. First the aerial bombardment, and then the NORTH CAROLINA and two destroyers went in.

We reached our target range late in the afternoon. I'm not sure just what time, but it was quite late and we started to fire on the island, picking out these targets as we went along. During the course of the afternoon and the nights, we sank a supply ship.

We also destroyed the air field, because we were firing from such a close range that our sixteen-inch guns were laying furrows down the airstrip. They are flying almost flat out and they were just plowing furrows down the airstrip. Sometimes they would skip off the field and burst.... Every time we hit one of these revetments loaded with warheads or bombs, they would go off like an atomic bomb. A column of heat and smoke would rise then break into a mushroom. We have some wonderful pictures of that.

Richard Walker, LCDR  
4th Division Officer

*Right:* One of the photographs LCDR Walker and others found useful.

Buildings, airstrip, planes, etc. are quite visible in the photo.



## Investigating the EIKO MARU

The file on the EIKO MARU is at least an inch thick. The search began when the second edition of the Battleship NORTH CAROLINA book was in progress. The first edition identified the ship as a troop transport. The action report tentatively identified it as a ship of the SYOEI MARU class. Could we confirm the type of ship and a name? With the assistance of the internet, the search began.

Initial research in August 2001, led to Shelley Shelstad, owner of History on CD Rom. He sent pages of material on the various ships named Syoei Maru as that was the class cited in the BB55 action report. He introduced me (Kim Sincox) to Dave Fortin, a diver on Kwajalein surveying Japanese wrecks. Dave did not think the wreck was the Syoei Maru based on the location and description stated in the action report. Dave pointed out several publications, including the scholarly book by Dan Bailey "WWII Wrecks of the Kwajalein and Truk Lagoons." Dave sent photographs of Roi-Namur and offered plenty of information. Based on the BB55 action report and another diver's finds, it appeared that Dan Bailey had identified the ship.

I wrote author Dan Bailey who provided the following: "The ship was known as both the Eiko Maru or Eiko Maru No. 2. It can best be described as a fleet auxiliary cargo ship (AK). It was a 340-foot long ship built in 1940 by Tama Sanbashi Co., Ltd. in Tama, Japan. It had little facilities for carrying troops (no extra cabins) and had four holds." Bailey, a diver, had scraped away marine growth and actually read the name of

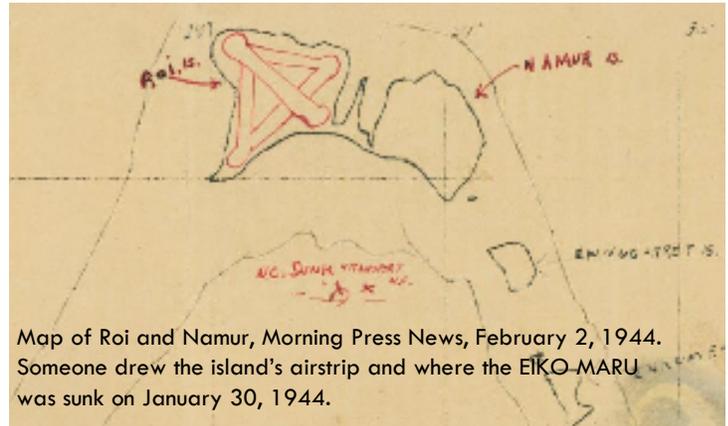
the ship on the hull. Further research in 2005 led to a website that listed four Eiko Marus and indeed stated that a U. S. surface craft ship sunk the one Bailey cited.

Captain Ben Blee identified the ship as a troop ship based on Air Defense Officer John E. Kirkpatrick's recollection that "he and others in high perches on board BB55 could actually see through their binoculars a large number of uniformed troops scurrying around the topside as the shells splashed. John granted that the ship might have been a merchantmen, but it was being used as a trooper." Blee stated from firsthand experience: "You don't need 'extra cabins' to haul troops in wartime. In early 1944 I sailed out of San Francisco in a cargo ship, the SS Matthew Thornton. She had a cargo hold forward which had been filled with bunks, thus converting her to a troopship for 225 sailors."

Our Eiko Maru 2 also appeared to be a sitting duck. She had been attacked by carrier aircraft on December 4, 1943, further north off Neil Island and towed to Roi for repairs.

Once the island was secured, divers explored Eiko Maru and, as Stryker recalled, removed valuable charts and various classified materials. According to Bailey, these records are housed in the National Archives, College Park, MD.

In August 2007, six years after the research began, Rick Anderson, a diver, sent an email to the Battleship. He had lived in Roi-Namur and retrieved artifacts during his dives on Eiko Maru. He had read Bailey's book and found a write-up on



Map of Roi and Namur, Morning Press News, February 2, 1944. Someone drew the island's airstrip and where the EIKO-MARU was sunk on January 30, 1944.



These artifacts were removed from the wreck of the Eiko Maru #2, in the summer of 1990. The donor, diver Rick Anderson, also shot videotapes of the dive. They show the damage from the blast of the Battleship's gunfire and images of the forward 3-inch gun deck. He also provided his dive log.

Above: Metal bowl, with mark of the Japanese Navy on the bottom (Navy of the Land of the Rising Sun). One of a stack of metal bowls the donor retrieved, then cleaned and preserved. It was removed from rear crew quarters. Width: 6-3/8 inches.



Above: One of two bottles removed. The amber bottle is marked "Dai Nippon Brewery Company Ltd" and the other bottle, clear glass, is marked "Kirin Brewery Co Ltd." By 1943, only Dai Nippon and Kirin brewing companies remained in Japan.

our website about the sinking.

Sunk in shallow water and close to shore, First Ship, as the wreck in called, is quite popular with divers. If you're ever in that neighborhood, check it out—or on-line. You can visit Dave Fortin's site: <http://wrecks.fortin-home.com>.

# Scuttlebutt January 2009

## Pearl Harbor Remembered



This portable pump organ is a close relative to those used during World War II. Below, divine service on the USS MISSOURI during WWII.



It was a cold, windy Sunday morning when a small group gathered on the ship's fantail to remember the attack on Pearl Harbor. CDR Alan Hansen, Command Chaplain, Camp Lejeune, and fellow chaplain CDR Robert Carpenter conducted the service. LT Robert Heckathorne, a third chaplain, valiantly played the folding church pump organ in the brusque wind (left) while members of the Living History Crew (below right) heartily sang the selected hymns. The service was based on divine services conducted on the Battleship in December 1941 and the 1942 Song & Service Book for Ship & Field. After the service, volunteer Frank Glossl gave our guests from Camp Lejeune a guided tour inside the warm ship.



The ship's original altar, podium, crucifix and candlesticks were used in the service. The handsome liturgical cloths were made and donated by a Roman Catholic group who once held a service aboard ship.



## Our Veterans at VA Hospitals Remembered at Christmas



Two years ago we started a project to make and send Christmas cards to veterans in North Carolina's veteran hospitals. There are four VA hospitals in the state serving more than 1,100 veterans.

The first year the holiday cards were part of a local high school student's senior project. We supplied the materials and our visitors made the cards. It was a delight to watch young Marines make cards for their veteran comrades.

Last year the card activity was led by a local Girl Scout Troop. Visitors to the ship enjoyed making the cards in the Battleship's Snack Bar.

This year emails were sent to area schools asking if their students would make cards to help make the holidays brighter for North Carolina veterans. The response was overwhelming!

By the middle of December, boxes full of Christmas cards flooded into the Battleship. More than 3,000 cards from

fourteen different schools (elementary, middle and high schools) were ultimately collected. There were enough cards to send to veteran hospitals in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. We were thrilled with the response and look forward to continuing this "new tradition" next year.



## From the Deck Log: Lt(jg) F.A. Gates Welcomes the New Year 1945

Forty-five is gone—here's forty-five,  
What a helluva place to see it arrive,  
The Captain is in his shack, and all the watch is alert,  
The uniform today is with hats—and with shirts.

But let's get along with my one ambition—  
To log this watch in the best Navy tradition,  
Which, so they tell me, call for verse,  
So here I go, for better or worse.

Now the watch is drinking coffee—  
The Navigator, tea.  
That's the way in Russia,  
But it's not for me.

The North Carolina (BB55),  
Is still in the Navy, hep to the jive,  
Afloat with Admiral Halsey's Fleet  
Hoping for a skunk to meet.

Our task force is numbered 38.3  
With Essex guide and O.T.C.  
38.1 and 2 comprise  
The rest of our fleet, 3-Williamized.

5 Roger is our disposition.  
Right now we're passing through position,  
130 degrees T from the guide we bear —  
Four thousand yards from here to there,

With Essex, Langley, Ticonderoga  
and San Jacinto we fear no bogie  
They're our flattops, queens of the ocean to you.  
But to us — just guys on circle two.

While at three and a half thousand, out away,  
There's the flin, Vincennes, Miami, Santa Fe  
And Biloxi, our cruisers—not to shun  
The North Carolina and the Washington.

Seventeen cans have a helluva time  
Chasing the subs on circle nine.  
Three of them, the Cotton, Priceht, and Preston,  
Are picketing for what may be a molestin!

295 degrees T & pge, is base course. But I'll not guarantee  
What the helmsman is heading, for when a look I'll steal  
I usually find him askeep at the wheel.  
(But I did hear him say, midst the din and the rumpus,  
"checking 276 per steeting compass")

16 knots is standard speed  
107rpm we need.  
But the tanks are waiting! There's fuel we must burn!  
Steam 25 knots—use 178 turns!

We're in material condition "Red Yoke" -  
Darkened. (On New Year's Eve? Some joke!)  
Condition of readiness is thee (Nan).  
On the twenties you'll find a navy a man.

On the line are all eight boilers  
Top speed from our black gang toilers!  
(26.5 knots can be done)  
Engineering condition 31.

In condition 8 are the planes.  
Radio 2, which means we must refrain  
from chipping, kicking, and squawking too much.  
Radar condition 5 (no guard, or such).

At zero zero twenty-five  
Course was changed to 305,  
Speed, to 22. Tell me, how  
Will we manage to use our fuel up now?

The Essex launched at fifty-eight past three.  
Our truck lights enabled them to see.  
Their pilots are training for what is to come.  
They'll hit the Japes, and we'll watch the fun!

The weather is cool, the moon is bright.  
Clouds fill half of the sky tonight.  
The sea is calm, there's a little wind.  
Like a lamb doth FORTY-FIVE come in!

— F. A. Gates, Lt (jg), USNR

It was the duty of the officer of the deck, upon completing his watch, to write remarks in the deck log and sign his name. This was the rough log, which was then typed by the Navigator's yeoman. He placed it in the wardroom for signatures by the various officers who had stood watch as officer of the deck. The typed version was called the smooth log.

Our archives contains a copy of the Battleship's entire deck log. The original, handwritten logs for the Ship-of-the-Line NORTH CAROLINA and Armored Cruiser NORTH CAROLINA are located in the National Archives branch in downtown Washington, D.C.