Where History Comes Alive

BATTLESHIP NORTH CAROLINA

Scuttlebutt

July 2009

News from the NORTH CAROLINA (SSN 777)

Hello shipmates, Dave Collins here, Chief of the Boat (that's the Command Master Chief for you Surface Navy folks) from USS NORTH CAROLINA (SSN 777), proudly representing your fine state and now of course relishing in UNC's recent win in the NCAA Men's Basketball Championship, and in Wilmington's own Miss Kristin Dalton's recent crowning as Miss USA.

The Tarheel boat has had a great year so far. As some of you may well know, the Captain and I brought a 15-man team to the Wilmington area to take part in Community Relations programs and a project for Hands on Wilmington the latter part of April.

We met with some school kids from Hoggard High School NJROTC unit and pretty much the whole school during lunchtime at the Eaton Elementary School. On the 25th, we all participated in the Hands on Wilmington project, doing some amateur submariner style landscaping and beautification at New Hanover High School.

We also attended a wonderful dinner on BB 55 on the night of the 24th, sharing sea stories and some delicious pork chops and (my first time) wonderful collard greens. That night was capped off by the viewing of an awesome video the Battleship commissioned which outlines the history of naval ships named NORTH CAROLINA.

We got to say "Hail" to Captain Terry Bragg and his lovely wife, and "Farewell" to Captain Dave Scheu, who has been such a huge part of Submarine NORTH CAROLINA's commissioning and early success. I have the Battleship teak-based plankowner plaque on my desk, and I'm extremely proud of it, and the heritage it represents. We're going to miss his good humor and limitless energy, but after having met Captain Bragg, Captain Scheu can be comforted in knowing his ship and command are in good hands.

The boat is in a Post Shakedown Availability right now, and for those rusty on their NavSpeak, that means about 14 to 16 months of intensive shipyard upgrades. How can we be getting upgraded already you may ask? Well, it all has to do with contractual obligations and the latest technology at the time of that contract. (Anyone remember brand new 688s being commissioned with stored energy systems just to have them ripped out months later?...)

We're being outfitted with the absolute newest (it's still being DEVELOPED as we speak) SONAR, Fire Control, and Radio Room. We're having all of our MILES of fiber optic cable upgraded to what's called "Blown Fiber" which can handle much larger volumes of information, at a much faster rate. We're having much of our hull covering replaced and upgraded, and all of our Power Conversion Modules (PCMs) are being upgraded. PCMs take the

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"Hello Shipmates! Dave Collins here, Chief of the Boat from SSN 777."

June Docent Day

Volunteer interpreters Bill Barnes, Cort Barnes, Kirk Binning, Frank Glossl, Kim Goodin, Cindy Goodin, Floy Hamilton, Helen Harrington, Si Harrington, David Keefe, Mark McAllister, James Weber, Andrew Whitley and John Whitley descended upon the Battleship on a warm day to interact with visitors. Using materials in our ship's archives the volunteers study about various aspects of the ship and share what they have learned and answer questions. Hands-on props add much to the visitor experience. The docents will be back onboard on Saturday, July 18th, so come and discover the Battleship again!

July Docent Day

Saturday, July 18th

Volunteer interpreters in stations throughout the Ship. Come and discover the Battleship NORTH CAROLINA again!

News from SSN 777 *continued*

place of Motor Generator (MG) sets, inverters, transformers, etc. They do all our DC to AC, AC to DC, step-up, step-down (and anything else you can think of) conversions. They're all solid state and computer controlled. I think PCM really stands for Pure Computer Magic, because they're pretty amazing gizmos.

Those are really just the biggest projects, there's thousands more, and you'll be proud to note: Our ship, your namesake state boat, will be the most technologically advanced and tactically capable submarine in the world, and that's no mean feat with some of the gee-whiz gadgets out there.

Electric Boat Shipyard, the Department of the Navy and the Submarine Force has really decided to take an incredibly capable boat to new extremes in technology, survivability and lethality.

We hope some day we can make the windy trip up the Cape Fear river again, but in the mean time, we'd love to (once we're out of the shipyard) have y'all visit us here in Connecticut sometime, and tell tall tales, tip back a few, and wait ten minutes for the New England weather to change its mind.

Going deep!

Dave Collins, COB

USS NORTH CAROLINA (SSN 777)

Behind the Scenes: Archives

Volunteer Kirk Binning is organizing the found-on-board engineering related papers in the archives. "I enjoy the job because it gives me time to feel the engineering plant and touch the people who rode this Battlewagon into war. You can see how procedures changed due to war."

Kirk found an engineer's note to the captain written after December 7th explaining the difference between a normal engine room and emergency startups. He uncovered a design memo written by LCDR H. G. Rickover. And did you know that we have a copy of the original contract for the main engines on the Battleship? One main engine was made by GE and the other three were made by the New York Navy Shipyard.

The latest find was the monthly fuel oil report that Kirk put into a database. Then he correlated the fuel oil graph with points in time. Kirk determined that from 4/1941 to 11/1945 the Battleship NORTH CAROLINA:

Average Speed was 15 knots
Steamed 307,988 miles
Used 53,890,426 gallons of fuel
Average fuel mileage was 145 Gallons/Mile

A native of Albuquerque, NM, Kirk joined the U.S. Navy in 1969 and became a Machinist Mate 3/c. He attended Nuclear Power School then Submarine School. His first assignment was on the USS *Simon Bolivar* (SSBN-641G) and made four FBM patrols out of Rota, Spain and left as a MM1/c (SS). Soon Kirk was assigned to the new construction crews of the USS *Los Angeles* (SSN-668) and then the USS *Baton Rouge* (SSN-689) before the crew of the USS *Memphis* was assembled. He was a plank owner on the *Memphis* and made sea trials and weapons test on her before his enlistment ended.

Kirk then left the active Navy and worked for the Los Alamos National Labs and joined the reserve Navy. He accepted the rank of Chief and "spent most of my time in shipyard units with active duties in San Diego, Pearl Harbor, Long Beach (brought the *USS New Jersey* out of mothballs) and Yokosuka, Japan."

He was Chief for eight years and put in for the Chief Warrant Officers' program and made Senior Chief a month before commissioning to CWO2 as an Engineering Repair Officer. His last ship was the USS *Peleliu* (LHA-A) in the Persian Gulf during Operation Desert Spring, 1996. Kirk retired as a CWO4 in 1997 and retired from Los Alamos in 2004.

Kirk began volunteering on the *North Carolina* this past spring and was asked to work on the engineering papers. He has discovered that what he "thought was going to be a very boring job turned out to be fun and educational!" You will also find Kirk Binning providing interpretation in the Engine Room on tour. He will greet you with "Welcome to the *North Carolina* Power and Light Company!"

Local Boy Scout Project Features NORTH CAROLINAs

The Klahican Lodge, Order of the Arrow, Boy Scouts of America, Cape Fear Council, Wilmington, NC, has created six patches featuring the ships named NORTH CAROLINA. Images and information for the patches and booklet were gathered in cooperation with the Battleship NORTH CAROLINA and are based on items and information found in the Battleship Collections.

Proceeds from the sale of the set of patches, named "Six Ships Called North Carolina," will benefit the BSA Cape Fear Council, and a portion of the proceeds are going to the Battleship NORTH CAROLINA.

The six large patches are sold only in sets and include a booklet about the ships' histories. The Ship-of-the-Line and BB 55 are two-piece patches, 5x6 inches. All others are 5x3 inches. Ghosted items are the ship BB 52, the Fleur-de-lis, Venus flytrap, and WWW. The set is also available in a plastic frame for protection only or in a wooden frame with background mat.

The basic set costs $55. The set in a plastic frame costs $75. The set in a wooden frame costs $140. There are shipping and handling fees and state sales tax. The order deadline is July 31st.

For inquiries and to order please contact John L. Fort, Jr.: jfortjr@juno.com or 910-799-5418.

Becoming a Green Battleship *by Ken Rittenmeyer*

Saving energy on an artifact built in the 1930s isn't easy but we're trying. A couple years ago after the Wednesday Group had replaced the status indicator lights in Main and Secondary Plots for about the third time, we had an idea. The bulbs we were using were costly specialty bulbs but the base was a standard candelabra screw base so we got some standard four watt night light bulbs at 25 cents each and used those. We saved on the price of the bulbs, but they still generated a lot of heat in the confined spaces of the ship and only lasted a few months at best.

We eventually transitioned to Light Emitting Diode (LED) bulbs. These bulbs last up to ten years, burn less than a half watt of electricity and generate very little heat. A new generation of volunteers can do the job next time, if and when the LED bulbs ever burn out.

The Maintenance Department thought it would be a good idea to replace the almost 1500 60 watt bulbs on the ship with Compact Florescent bulbs (CFL). A CFL uses 13 watts or 22% the wattage of a 60 watt bulb. Beginning in June 2007, Steve Lewis and Terry Kuhn began replacing the bulbs. The payoff is not only the almost 80% decrease in the energy required to fill the ship's lighting needs, but a significant decrease in the air conditioning loads in the climate controlled portions of the ship, a more comfortable temperature in the non-air conditioned portions of the ship, and a decrease in man-hours required to replace burned out bulbs. CFLs last about 10,000 hours, ten times longer than conventional bulbs. Steve continues to track the lifespan of every bulb he replaces.

The effort paid off recently when the commercial power failed and the ship's emergency generator picked up the load. Previously the 250 amp generator was working hard to meet the ship's electrical requirements. The more efficient bulbs decreased the load on the generator by about 160 amps or 64% of its design capacity.

The NORTH CAROLINA slid into the water 69 years ago and while she wasn't built to our present day environmental standards, there are still ways we can operate more efficiently and conserve resources.

The CSS NORTH CAROLINA

Computer generated image by Daniel Dowdey, 2000.

CSS NORTH CAROLINA

Builder: Beery Brothers Shipyard, Wilmington NC

Completed: June 1863

Length: 174 feet overall; 150 feet between stem and stern posts

Beam: 34 feet

Guns: Four Brooke rifles, unknown number 8-inch

Complement: 150-182 men (Navy and Marines)

Sank: 1864

In conducting research for a new exhibit, The Legacy of the NORTH CAROLINAs, I found references to the CSS *North Carolina* in the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion. The letters and reports document the ironclad's rise and fall.

September 1862

"The gunboat *North Carolina* is to be launched next Saturday and is to be clad with railroad iron down to the water's edge. The sides of the boat are built angular, and the guns are to be mounted on a covered deck. The lower part of the hull is of pine and the upper of heavy oak. This vessel is to be fitted up by Mr. Benjamin Beery, and the engine she is to have is to come out of the steamer *Uncle Ben*, formerly a tugboat. The contrabands state that they are sanguine of having her ready by the 10th of October 1862."

Commander G.H. Scott, commanding USS MARATANZA and SOP. "From William Robins, contraband, ship carpenter, who has been at work upon one of the rebel gunboats at Wilmington since July. There are two boats in process of construction; one at J.L. Cassidy & Sons', the other at [Beery] & Brothers'. Captain Whitehead superintends the former and Mr. Williams the latter. Commander Muse has control of the whole. Both boats are built upon the same plan, 150 feet keel, 23 feet beam, 12 feet draft. They are to be iron-roofed, like the *Merrimack*. The iron is to be made in Richmond and will be ready in four months. The engines are on board, but not set. One of them is new, made at Richmond; the other was taken from the *Uncle Ben*. Propellers are about eight feet in diameter. The boats are pierced for eight guns, but will carry but three, which can be moved at ease. Guns are not yet ready. Boats would have been ready for launching in three weeks had not many of the workmen left. Some struck for more pay; some were fearful of yellow fever. Formerly 95 to 100 were at work on each boat; now only 30. Pay, $2.50 to $3."

Note: Yellow fever broke out in Wilmington in Sept. 1862 and shipbuilders left the city.

October 2, 1862

Letter from Acting Rear Admiral Lee USN on US Flagship MINNESOTA off Newport News, to Commander Scott, USN. "SIR: Information in which implicit confidence may be placed has this day reached me through the Navy Department that there are now being built at Wilmington, N.C., two ironclad gunboats, each of about 800 tons burden, which were to have been completed on or about the 1st of October. The iron used in these boats is said to have been brought from Richmond, Va.

April 6, 1863

Letter from Flag Officer Lynch CSN to Senator Davis, regarding the transfer of men from the Army to the Navy for duty on ironclads building in North Carolina. "DEAR SIR: There is such an urgent necessity for men to compose the crews of the ironclad gunboats building in North Carolina, some of which are rapidly approaching completion, that I take the liberty of earnestly beseeching your influence to enable me to obtain them. There are many men in the Army who, from having been fishermen, pilots, and navigators of sounds and rivers, are admirably adapted to our purpose, and many such have applied to me for transfer to the Navy…. "One ironclad, the *North Carolina*, building here, is very nearly ready for her crew, the complement of which is 150 men."

October 13, 1863

Report of Capt. Sands, USN, on USS DACOTAH, regarding disposition of vessels off Wilmington. "Captain Ridgely reports that on the morning of the 9th instant he picked [up] three…men in a boat who represent themselves as deserters from the rebel ram *North Carolina*, under command of William T. Muse (formerly) lieutenant-commander, USN. They say the ram is too shaky and weak to go to sea, and that she has moved from Smithville to new Inlet, under Fort Fisher; that Commodore Lynch is building a gunboat, which is nearly ready for launching, with which he intends to attack the blockaders.

November 30, 1863

Report to Navy CSA regarding vessels in commission, Cape Fear River: *North Carolina* Ironclad sloop, 4 guns, Commander W.T. Muse.

January 4, 1864

Rear-Admiral John Dahlgren, USS BRIG PERRY, Off Morris Island. "SIR: George Brimsmaid, captured at Merrell's Inlet, was a…man belonging to New London, Conn., shipped as landsman on board the *North Carolina*,

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CSS NORTH CAROLINA *continued*

September 24, 1863, was transferred to this vessel from there October 29, 1863, aged 23 years. Had been interrogated as to whether he was a slave, and he said he never been one. He has no arms when captured. Very respectfully, your obedient servant, Saml. B. Gregory, Acting Master, Commanding."

March 2, 1864

Letter of Flag-Officer Lynch, CSN, to Major-General Whiting, CSA, Headquarters Naval Defenses, Wilmington NC. "The *North Carolina* is having a new smokestack and some repairs to her battery, preparatory to taking a position lower down, and the other ironclad is being pushed forward toward completion with all expedition."

May 1, 1864

Report of Acting Volunteer Lt. Breck, USN, giving information received from a refugee regarding affairs at Wilmington and vicinity. "The ironclad *North Carolina* intends to come out if she can get over the bar, but, as she draws 15 feet they think it doubtful. The ironclad *Raleigh* is on shore about 8 miles up the river from Fort Fisher, and it is thought she will not get off; she draws 16 feet. Both the *Raleigh* and *North Carolina* are very slow."

June 27, 1864

Statement of John B Patrick, Seaman. "I formerly belonged to the gunboat *North Carolina*, at Wilmington, and left her in the launches. After leaving Charleston I came to Wilmington and entered the Navy and went on the *North Carolina* about seven months. Capt. Muse then commanded her. He died and Porter took her. He was the executive officer. She is a ram, four guns, just like those at Richmond. Her engines are very bad, always out of repair. They have but the *North Carolina* now; she never got down far without breaking something and had to be towed back. I have heard she escorts blockade runners out, but don't know it. Don't know how much she draws."

July 2, 1864

Lt. Cushing USN report, on USS MONTICELLO off Cape Fear coast. "The ironclad *North Carolina*…is in commission, and at anchor off the city. She is but little relied upon, and would not stand long against a monitor."

September 27, 1864

Major General Whiting CSA Army, Wilmington. "I have less force to secure Wilmington now than at any time during the war and every available man and gun are needed more than ever. The two ironclads, the *Raleigh* and *North Carolina*, on which we relied to defend the rips, or inner bars, are both gone. We have no naval forces afloat, and one is greatly needed."

September 28, 1864

Report of Acting Ensign Semon, USN, on USS NIPHON, off New Inlet, NC. "From Mr. Schermerhorn I obtained the following information…the ironclad *North Carolina* sunk near Wilmington…."

November 5, 1864

CSA Navy Dept. report. "The ironclad sloop *North Carolina*, while under command of flag officer William F. Lynch, became unserviceable from the destructive operations of the sea worm, and has been dismantled and an investigation of the case will be made."

Did You Know?

"Shipworms are not worms at all, but rather a group of unusual saltwater clams with very reduced shells, notorious for boring into (and eventually destroying) wooden structures that are immersed in sea water, such as piers, docks and wooden ships. Sometimes called termites of the sea."

Wikipedia

UNC-TV Presents OUR STATE

If you missed it the first time (or would like to see it again) UNC-TV will repeat "Hidden Treasures" of the Battleship NORTH CAROLINA on Thursday, July 9th. Learn about the ship's archival treasures and what remains hidden in store rooms throughout the ship. *(Original radio tubes right)*

June Docent Day

Top Row: Helen Harrington in the galley and Bill Barnes explaining how a 5-inch gun was fired.
Middle Row: Kim Goodin on the main deck, Frank Glossl describes City at Sea, and Mark McAllister explains sailor clothing.
Bottom Row: Cindy Goodin explains the ship's bake shop
(All photos by Kim Sincox)

Explore and Discover! Battleship NORTH CAROLINA

Business Office: Director: Capt. Terry Bragg, USN (Ret.)
Maintenance Director: Roger Miller; Comptroller: Elizabeth Rollinson
Brooke Laton, Candy Edwards, Kim Mintz
Maintenance: Robert Hall, Terry Kuhn, Steve Lewis, Phil Southworth, Gary Pietak
Museum: Kim Sincox, Mary Ames Booker
Programs: Danielle Wallace, Shelly Robinson
Promotions: Heather Loftin
Ship's Store: Leesa McFarlane, Cathy Shipman, Devin Buie, Tara Banks, Sabrina Porter
Night Watchmen: Danny Bradshaw, Bill Parr, Brian Gibson
Webmaster: Randy Drew

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