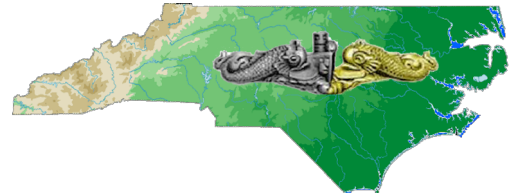


All Clear



OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF NORTH CAROLINA SUBVETS

2024 First Quarter



March 3, 2024 - USS Asheville PG-21 Memorial Dedication Ceremony

USS Asheville Base Honor Guard, Vice Mayor, Naval History and Heritage Command Director Rear Admiral Samuel Cox U.S. Navy (retired), ex-Commanding Officer of USS Asheville, American Legion Post 317 Auxiliary, mayor staff policemen and firemen attended dedication of the USS Asheville PG-21 Memorial. The Honor guard presented colors and provided military honors. The North Carolina Submarine Museum Foundation – in partnership with the City of Asheville hosted the event.

ALL CLEAR is the award winning quarterly publication of the United States Submarine Veterans, Inc. (USSVI) sharing information from all USSVI bases in North Carolina

USSVI CREED AND PURPOSE

To perpetuate the memory of our shipmates who gave their lives in the pursuit of their duties while serving their country. That their dedication, deeds and supreme sacrifice be a constant source of motivation toward greater accomplishments. Pledge loyalty and patriotism to the United States of America and its Constitution.

In addition to perpetuating the memory of departed shipmates, we shall provide a way for all Submariners to gather for the mutual benefit and enjoyment. Our common heritage as Submariners shall be strengthened by camaraderie. We support a strong U.S. Submarine Force. The organization will engage in various projects and deeds that will bring about the perpetual remembrance of those shipmates who have given the supreme sacrifice.

The organization will also endeavor to educate all third parties it comes in contact with about the services our submarine brothers performed and how their sacrifices made possible the freedom and lifestyle we enjoy today.

North Carolina Submarine Veterans are Proud Members of the
United States Submarine Veterans, Inc. USSVI.org

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All Clear Editor - Joe Peek

This issue's cover page has a photo of the USS Asheville (Patrol Gunboat - 21) Memorial Dedication attendees. Normally, I would post a short summary about the PG -21 and how this honor came about. However, the first All Clear article is the speech Naval History and Heritage Command Director Rear Admiral Samuel Cox U.S. Navy (retired) he intended to give at the ceremony but the strong wind created unexpected difficulties. The North Carolina Submarine Museum Foundation, in partnership with the City of Asheville, dedicated the monument to the 166 crew members on Sunday, March 3, 2024 in historic Riverside Cemetery.

It has been 20 years since a group of North Carolina Submarine Veterans (NC Sub Vets) had the first memorial ceremony at Lost Boats Memorial at Moonshine Mountain created by Harell Flowers TMC/SS. Thanks to Joe Schmidt and members of the USS Asheville and Carolina-Piedmont Base, the Lost Boats Remembrance Ceremony just gets better. **Note: the remembrance ceremony will be at 1000 and the NC Sub Vets meeting at Big Lynn Lodge at 1400.** At the meeting a ES1 District Visitation Proposed Concept may be discussed. A copy of the proposed concept created by Tarheel Base Commander Tony Van Schaick. Tony has to commended for the great deal of thought and work he put into this visitation concept.

When possible, the latest SSN 777 Club Newsletter is included in our quarterly journal giving us an update not only on the USS North Carolina but also USS Asheville and USS Charlotte. This issue has latest SSN 777 Club Newsletter from January 2024.

The last story is about the Eternal Patrol Memorial Reef complete in 2019 resurfaced recently. The On Eternal Patrol Memorial Reef is a group of 67 reef balls, each weighing approximately 1,800 pounds, one for each of the 65 missing submarines marked with a plaque indicating the name of boat, best known last location and loss of life. The Eternal Patrol Memorial Reef is located in the ocean nine miles off Sarasota's Big Pass in 45-foot of water, GPS coordinates: 27 15.795N 82 45.505W. The photo below is of the 2018 dedication ceremony.



North Carolina Submarine Veterans Leadership

District Commander ES1 - Mike Sears

NC SubVets Commander - Jerry Emerson

Albemarle Sound

Commander: Frank Jones III

Sr. Vice Commander:

Secretary: Nikolaus A. Epp

Treasurer: Matthew L. Cinkovich

Old North State

Commander: Vince Sievert

Vice Commander: Mike Sears

Secretary: John E. Murray

Treasurer: Dennis Cloutier

Carolina Piedmont

Commander: Richard Pettit

Vice Commander: James F. Goins

Secretary: Tom Kelly

Treasurer: William Strand

Tarheel Base

Commander: Anthony Van Shaick

Vice Commander: Wade Cooper

Secretary: Leland Kuntzman

Treasurer: Tom McFadden

Coastal Carolina

Commander: Scott L. Powell

Vice Commander: Kevin Kesterson

Secretary: William H. Underwood

Treasurer: Terry L. Kuhn

USS Asheville

Commander: Joseph R. Schmidt Sr.

Vice Commander: Eugene Ipox Jr.

Treasurer: Richard L. Cox

Secretary: James A. Secord

Nathanael Greene

Commander: Joey Hundley

Vice Commander: Joseph Peek

Secretary: David Lemly

Treasurer: Frank Gardner

NC SubVets Calendar of Events

1. May 11th - Blooming Festival Parade (Nashville, NC) - Old North State
2. May 17-19th Burnsville Submarine Memorial Gathering (Moonshine Mountain)
3. May 27th Thomasville Memorial Day Parade - Nat Greene Base
4. May 27th Memorial Day Ceremony at the S-28 Monument followed by a Base Picnic at noon and Battleship Festivities - Coastal Carolina Base
5. May 27th Memorial Day Ceremony at the Jack Laughery Veterans Park - Old North State
6. Jun 29th Nathanael Greene Picnic at Triad Park (tentatively)
7. May 29th Jun 2nd USS Groton Base 60th Anniversary Party
8. Jun 28th Holly Springs minor league baseball game - Old North State
9. July 4th Independence Day Celebration Englewood Baptist Church - Float Old North State
10. July 26th Durham Bulls Friday Night Game - Tarheel Base
11. Aug 19 -24th USSVI National Convention (Cleveland, OH)

For updates to NC SubVets Calendar - visit ncsubvets.org
to have events added - ncsubvets.org@gmail.com



August 19-24, 2024

NHHC Director's Remarks: Dedication of USS *Asheville* (PG-21) Monument Riverside Cemetery, Asheville, North Carolina, 3 March 2024

(Note: the wind rendered the use of the podium microphone and notes useless, so what follows is a close approximation of what I said, or in a few cases, meant to say).

Vice Mayor Kilgore, former commanding officers of USS *Asheville* (SSN-758), North Carolina submarine veterans, members of the Asheville Fire Department, other veterans and their families, ladies and gentlemen:

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to remember and honor the valiant crew of a ship, lost in a battle against overwhelming odds, 82 years ago today, in a war that preserved the freedom we enjoy today.

As the director of the Naval History and Heritage Command, one of my duties is to serve as the federal executive for the Sunken Military Craft Act. This makes my command responsible, as best we can, to protect all sunken U.S. Navy ships and aircraft from disturbance, a task we take very seriously—and this would include the [USS *Asheville* \(PG-21\)](#), lost somewhere in the great depths south of Java.

I have been asked on occasion, “Why care about lost ships—don’t those represent a defeat?” My response is that most U.S. Navy ships have been lost in the course of victory, and victory has a price, sometimes steep. Many of the U.S. Navy ships lost in a defeat displayed extraordinary valor while being hopelessly outnumbered or outgunned—such is the case with *Asheville*. Even in an utter defeat, such as [Pearl Harbor](#), there is extreme courage that deserved to be remembered—at Pearl Harbor there were 15 Medals of Honor and 51 Navy Crosses—there would have been many more had not so many witnesses been killed.

Sunken U.S. Navy ships are the last resting place of sailors who made the ultimate sacrifice, against the enemy, and sometimes a deadly sea. These ships are in effect the Arlington National Cemetery of the U.S. Navy and deserve to be treated with the same respect. There are no headstones at sea, and few ships have a monument to their sacrifice, such as the one we are dedicating here today.

When I first took this job nine years ago, I was visiting the U.S. Naval Academy Museum, which falls within my command. As we were going through the “attic” in which art and artifacts are stored and not on display, I saw out of the corner of my eye a painting that caught my attention, and I had the curator pull it out for a closer look. It showed what looked to me like a China gunboat, battered and burning fiercely, engaged in a battle against a couple of ships that were keeping their distance. But what struck me was that the ship was returning fire, despite the severe damage, and large battle flags were flying high from both masts. The painting was titled “USS *Asheville*’s Defiance” by the great maritime artist Tom Freeman.

I was perplexed because I have been reading naval history since I was in kindergarten, and I did not know of this action. So, I looked in the “gospel” of naval history in World War II, Samuel Eliot Morison’s 15-volume *History of the United States Navy in World War II* (Volume III, *Rising Sun in the Pacific*)—and all it said was “and USS *Asheville* was sunk.” After further digging and learning the whole story, I decided I wanted that painting to hang in the most prominent spot in my office because it told a story I believed needed to be told. As it turned out, the Freeman family very graciously loaned me a print.

So, let’s go back to the beginning, and in the interest of time (and many people standing), I’m

not going to tell the entire history of the ship. The reason there was a ship named *Asheville* was because the good citizens of Asheville lobbied hard for one —and because the Secretary of the Navy at the time, Josephus Daniels, was from North Carolina and thought that was a truly fine idea. The patrol gunboat *Asheville* was authorized in 1916, before the U.S. entered World War I, but because building destroyers was the priority once the war started, *Asheville* was not completed and commissioned until after the war, in July 1920.

Of note, *Asheville*'s first commanding officer was Lieutenant Commander Elliot Buckmaster, who would become an early aviator and would be in command of the aircraft carrier [USS Yorktown \(CV-5\)](#) at the [Battle of Midway](#), where his skillful leadership kept the ship afloat despite grievous damage from Japanese aircraft, and would have saved the ship but for the late arrival of a Japanese submarine. Buckmaster would retire as a vice admiral. In fact, of *Asheville*'s 16 commanding officers, six of them would make flag rank, including two four-stars and two three-stars.

Asheville's third commanding officer was Lieutenant Commander James O. Richardson, who took the ship from the East Coast through the Mediterranean, Suez Canal, and Indian Ocean for the ship's first deployment to China in 1922. During the very chaotic situation in China following the fall of the Manchu Dynasty, *Asheville* repeatedly engaged in actions to protect U.S. lives and property, very literally meeting the definition of "gunboat diplomacy."

Richardson would go on to be a four-star Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet/U.S. Pacific Fleet, and when President Roosevelt ordered the Battle Fleet to stay in Hawaii in 1940 rather than return to its home port in San Pedro, Richardson argued that the move was logistically unsound, was a provocation rather than a deterrent to the Japanese, and that Pearl Harbor was indefensible against air attack—for which he was fired. This resulted in Admiral Husband Kimmel drawing the short straw to be in command when the Japanese attacked, even though his views were much the same as Richardson's.

Although *Asheville* spent most of her career on the China Station, she also served along the coast of Central America, particularly protecting U.S. interests in Nicaragua in the early 1930s. By the late 1930s, *Asheville* was back in Chinese waters, and in 1937, a sailor reported aboard *Asheville* named Richard McKenna. He would subsequently serve aboard the destroyer [USS Edsall \(DD-219\)](#) and the river gunboat [USS Luzon \(PR-7/PG-47\)](#) on China Station. He would retire as a chief machinist's mate after the Korean War and would subsequently write the award-winning novel *The Sand Pebbles*, which was made into the 1966 movie starring Steve McQueen and Candice Bergen. The book and movie depict the fictional U.S. gunboat "*San Pablo*" on the Yangtze River during the onset of the Chinese Revolution in 1925–1927. (So, if you think the "*San Pablo*" in *The Sand Pebbles* looks a lot like the *Asheville*, it is not a coincidence.)

As tensions between the U.S. and Japan intensified in the summer of 1941, the commander in chief of the Asiatic Fleet, Admiral Thomas C. Hart, withdrew the *Asheville* and other ships from Chinese waters to the Philippines. By the fall of 1941, there was extensive intelligence to indicate that war would break out in the Far East, and Hart sent most of his ships farther south, out of range of Japanese bombers from Formosa, thereby sparing the fleet the debacle that befell General MacArthur's air forces in the Philippines. However, the Japanese quickly achieved air supremacy and as a result, the U.S. ships, mostly World War I–vintage destroyers, were constantly under threat or attack by Japanese aircraft. The Allied effort in the Dutch East Indies quickly collapsed into an utter rout in the face of the Japanese onslaught. On 27–28 February 1942, a combined U.S., British, Dutch, and Australian force was decisively defeated in the [Battle of the Java](#)

[Sea](#). On 1 March, surviving U.S. forces were ordered to withdraw from the Dutch East Indies (including Java) to Australia.

During the period January–February 1942, *Asheville* conducted patrols out of a port on the south coast of Java that no one can pronounce (Tjilatjap) and that the sailors called “Slapjack.” As ordered, *Asheville* commenced a transit toward Australia. Her power plant had always been cantankerous, and *Asheville* suffered an engineering casualty that reduced her speed even below her normal maximum of 12 knots. As a result, *Asheville* was transiting alone, heading for a rendezvous point that had been compromised by communications security violations, and the Japanese were waiting.

On 3 March, *Asheville* was sighted by a Japanese scout plane and then intercepted by two Japanese destroyers, backed up by the heavy cruiser *Maya*. The *Arashi* and *Nowaki* were among the most modern destroyers in the Japanese navy, each armed with six 5-inch guns and powerful torpedoes, compared to the elderly *Asheville*, which was armed with three antiquated 4-inch guns. Admiral Hart had once described the *Asheville* as “lacking the speed to run and lacking the guns to fight.”

Running was not an option. Surrender was an option, but *Asheville*’s commanding officer, Lieutenant Commander Jacob “Jake” Britt (USNA ’29) chose to fight. From the Japanese perspective, the battle that followed was a total fiasco. It took the two Japanese destroyers more than 300 rounds to get the *Asheville* to stop shooting back and to finally sink it, a ship that was not deemed worthy of expending a torpedo.

As *Asheville* began to sink, sailors from the engineering spaces came on deck to find the bridge and forecandle mostly blown away, and most everyone who was topside was already dead. Once in the water, a Japanese destroyer rescued one survivor, Fireman Second Class Fred Brown (later promoted to first class while missing in action status), presumably so they could positively identify the ship they had just sunk. The other survivors were left behind, and all perished along with those who went down with the ship. Brown was treated decently on the destroyer, but would ultimately die in a Japanese prison camp from the combined effects of beatings and disease. Brown related his limited view of the battle to a survivor of the heavy cruiser [USS Houston \(CA-30\)](#). That would become the only account of the battle from the U.S. side and would not be known until after the war.

There is no way of knowing what Lieutenant Commander Britt did, other than choosing to fight, or how long he even survived the onslaught of Japanese shellfire. But as an academy graduate of the interwar years, he was steeped in the tradition of John Paul Jones (“I have not yet begun to fight!”) as well as the immortal dying words of Captain James Lawrence in the War of 1812, “Don’t give up the ship!” Jake Britt was true to those words.

It may be possible to extrapolate Britt’s actions from those of another academy graduate, Lieutenant Joshua Nix (USNA ’30), who was in command of the World War I–vintage destroyer *Edsall* in an action against the Japanese south of Java on 1 March 1942. *Edsall* was believed to be responding to the distress calls of the oiler [Pecos \(AO-6\)](#) sunk by Japanese carrier aircraft. In addition to her own crew, *Pecos* had on board the survivors of the seaplane tender (and former first U.S. aircraft carrier) [USS Langley \(AV-3, ex-CV-1\)](#). The destroyer *Whipple* (DD-217) managed to rescue 233 survivors before sonar contacts on a Japanese submarine forced curtailment of the rescue, leaving about 500 survivors behind in the vast Indian Ocean, none of whom were ever found, despite a search.

In her effort, *Edsall* ran right into the Japanese carrier force: four carriers, two battleships, two heavy cruisers, one light cruiser, and six destroyers. *Edsall* came within 12 miles of the Japanese carriers before being spotted. The incensed Vice Admiral Nagumo (who had commanded that Japanese carrier force during the attack on Pearl Harbor) sent the two battleships (*Hiei* and *Kirishima*) and both heavy cruisers (*Tone* and *Chikuma*) to dispatch what they misidentified as a light cruiser.

With his speed already impaired by previous damage, Lieutenant Nix had no hope of outrunning the Japanese battleships and cruisers. Yet in the face of such overwhelming odds, just as Lieutenant Commander Britt would two days later, Nix chose to fight rather than give up the ship. And, for almost two hours, with use of skillfully laid smoke screens and extraordinary ship handling, Nix caused more than 1,400 Japanese 14-inch and 8-inch shells to miss, suffering only one hit—and *Edsall* nearly hit one of the cruisers with a torpedo. Finally, completely embarrassed by the dismal showing of his surface ships against what they now knew to be an elderly destroyer, the apoplectic Admiral Nagumo launched 26 dive-bombers from three carriers. Even so, Nix maneuvered to cause most of the bombs to miss, but there were just too many.

As *Edsall* began to sink, Nix turned the bow of the ship toward the Japanese in a final gesture of defiance, a Navy equivalent of—well, you know. The survivors of *Edsall* conducted an orderly abandon ship, and the Japanese observed an officer then proceed to the bridge, presumably Lieutenant Nix, who went down with his ship. The Japanese rescued only seven survivors, a mix of crew and U.S. Army Air Forces pilots who had been aboard. Although treated decently aboard the *Chikuma*, all would later be executed by beheading in a Japanese prison camp. As a result, no one from *Edsall* survived the war.

There is a postscript to the loss of *Asheville*. Three months later at the decisive Battle of Midway on 4 June 1942, despite having the advantage of surprise, the battle was going badly for the Americans. The air group of [Hornet \(CV-8\)](#) had overshot the Japanese carriers, as had the two dive-bomber squadrons from [Enterprise \(CV-6\)](#). The torpedo bomber squadrons from the three U.S. carriers had become separated and engaged the Japanese piecemeal. Almost every torpedo bomber was shot down. At that time, only one dive-bomber squadron from *Yorktown* was actually heading directly toward the four Japanese carriers.

The leader of the *Enterprise* Air Group, Lieutenant Commander Wade McClusky, knew his planes were already past the point of no return regarding fuel and he would have to decide whether to land on Midway Island or turn back and hope the U.S. carriers had closed the distance. At that critical moment, McClusky sighted a lone ship transiting at high speed. He correctly deduced that the ship was trying to return or catch up to the main Japanese force, and he chose to turn in the direction the ship was heading. The result was that the two *Enterprise* dive-bomber squadrons and the *Yorktown* squadron arrived over the Japanese carriers at the same time, resulting in mortally wounding three of the four.

What had happened was that the U.S. submarine [Nautilus \(SS-168\)](#)—Lieutenant Commander William Brockman [USNA '27] in command), despite being repeatedly strafed, bombed, and depth-charged, kept trying to get in range of the Japanese carriers. Finally, Admiral Nagumo directed a destroyer to stay behind and keep the submarine pinned down. That destroyer was the *Arashi*, one of the two that had sunk *Asheville*. It was her high-speed transit back to the carriers that was instrumental in changing the course of the battle, and of the war.

Arashi would be sunk in 1943 in the Battle of Vela Gulf. *Nowaki* would be sunk in October 1944,

with the loss of all hands, including all the survivors of the cruiser *Chikuma* that were aboard. The fatal flaw in the Japanese plan for the Midway operation was written right into the operations order: “The enemy [the Americans] lacks the will to fight.” Had the writers of the order in Tokyo paid attention the reports of the actions of *Asheville*, *Edsall*, *Pecos*, *Houston*, [Pillsbury \(DD-227\)](#), and others in the fall of the Dutch East Indies, they should have reached a far different conclusion. The U.S. Navy was in fact willing to fight, even against the greatest of odds. So, to bring this to a close: At every memorial service to sailors lost in battle or to the sea, the Navy makes a promise to them and their families that we will not forget their sacrifice. And if we expect sailors to fight and die for this country, the least we can do as a Navy and a nation is to remember them. In the case of *Asheville* and *Edsall*—and *Pillsbury*—there were no surviving American witnesses. As a result, there are no Medals of Honor, no Navy Crosses, no Presidential Unit Citations, or even Navy Unit Commendations for what by the Japanese accounts were among the most valorous actions in the history of the U.S. Navy. Neither Lieutenant Commander Jacob Britt nor Lieutenant Joshua Nix was ever honored by the name of a ship, but both are at the top of my short list of recommendations to the Secretary of the Navy for future ship names.

The reason the painting of “*Asheville’s Defiance*” is on my wall is because she is representative of a number of ships and submarines from which none of the crews ever came home. There was no one left to tell their story, so as the director of Naval History, I consider it my duty to tell their story, and to ensure the Navy keeps our promise never to forget. I deeply appreciate your presence here today, to help me keep that promise. Thank you.

(Sources include: Naval History and Heritage Command *Dictionary of American Fighting Ships* (DANFS) for U.S. ships; combinedfleet.com “Tabular Record of Movement” for Japanese ships; *Rising Sun, Falling Skies: The Disastrous Java Sea Campaign of World War II* by Jeffrey R. Cox, Osprey Publishing, 2014; *In the Highest Degree Tragic: The Sacrifice of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet in the East Indies During World War II* by Donald M. Kehn, Jr., Potomac Books, 2017; *The Fleet the Gods Forgot: The U.S. Asiatic Fleet in World War II* by W. G. Winslow, Naval Institute Press, 1982; *The Lonely Ships: The Life and Death of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet* by Edwin P. Hoyt, Jove Books, 1977.)

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Quarterly News

Happy New Year, 777 Club and Friends!

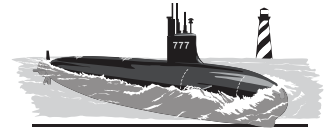
What an exciting end to the year for 777. Clearly the headline for the current deployment was the portcall to HMAS Stirling in Perth, Western Australia. While our USS ASHEVILLE called there just five months earlier, NORTH CAROLINA's visit came soon after the announcement of the AUKUS defense partnership which will dramatically increase Australia's attack submarine capabilities. As such, the event attracted significant attention including dignitary visits and a [30min TV piece on Australian "60 Minutes"](#) complete with a reporter visit while at-sea.

October saw Tar Heel crew and families celebrating the midpoint of the deployment, with "Halfway Night" night celebrations both at-sea and on the beach. The generous donations of 777 Club and NC Daughters of American Revolution members enabled purchase of needed and wanted items bundled into care packages which significantly boosted sailor morale at an important time.

Back on O'ahu, the Family Readiness Group organized a Halfway Luau which was followed by other family-focused events including a Holiday Pancake Breakfast with families from other Pearl Harbor-based submarines. FRG's efforts to maintain a strong support structure were recognized by NC's First Lady, Kristen Cooper, in an open letter just before Christmas.

The end of 2023 was no less active in the worlds of USS CHARLOTTE and ASHEVILLE, including College Football and Public Monuments – look more into this issue to find out more!

Aloha,
Gray



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USS NORTH CAROLINA

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"First in Fight"

UPCOMING EVENTS



Early 2024:
777 Expected Return to
Homeport (Pearl Harbor)

Spring 2024:
SSN777 Club presentation
at USNA Alumni-Cape Fear
Chapter

"Pacific Partnership" – Below:
777 transits the Indian Ocean in
July'23 during Exercise Talisman
Sabre, which is the largest bilateral
military exercise between Australia
and the US.



Perth Portcall

“

The USS North Carolina's visit builds on a strong tradition of Australia welcoming U.S. sailors to its shores, advances our shared security goals in the region, and exemplifies the immense friendship and trust between our countries.

”

Caroline Kennedy
U.S. Ambassador to Australia



“Foreign Shores” – Above: (SSN 777) arrives in Perth, Western Australia in Aug’23 to support the recent execution of the massive AUKUS defense partnership.

“Aussie Rules Football” – Below: NCA crew interact with students of a STEM high school during Perth portcall.



Celebration of Halfway Night



“Packages a’Plenty” – Halfway Boxes gathered and prepared for loading aboard the boat prior to deployment. These care packages are opened months later during “Halfway Night” celebration.

“Thank you for your contributions to the Tarheel team. The halfway night boxes and prizes were a huge hit amongst many Sailors!”

CDR Tad Robbins
CO USS NORTH CAROLINA



“Halfway Home” – While their loved ones are at sea, Tar Heel families gather for a Luau to mark the deployment’s midpoint and mirrors similar celebrations occurring at sea.



"Sailors with Santa" – Sea Cadets join families of NORTH CAROLINA, CHARLOTTE, VERMONT, and MISSOURI at Holiday Pancake Breakfast.

"Holiday Wishes"
 – The First Lady of North Carolina, Kristen Cooper, extends her holiday sentiments and support to families of 777 sailors.

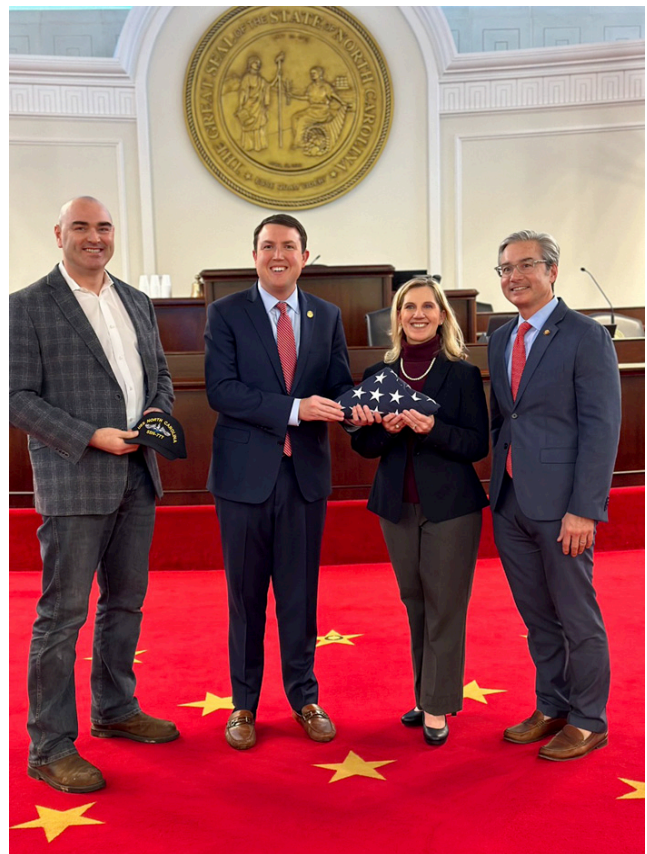


Submarines and Senators

A flag presentation ceremony was held in December on the floor of the NC Senate Chamber. Representatives of the Triangle Navy community presented command ballcaps along with a national ensign flown over the USS CHARLOTTE to NC Senator Dave Craven who was joined by Senator Michael Lee. While Sen Craven was born in and represents the greater Randolph County area in the NC Senate, he is a former student body president and Belk College Alumni Award recipient of UNC Charlotte. Senator Lee represents most of New Hanover County, including Wilmington which is the Commissioning City of USS NORTH CAROLINA, and home of BB-55 Battleship NC Memorial.

Special thanks to the NC Submarine Museum Foundation for coordinating the event.

From left: CDR. Gray Tompson USNR, President, SSN 777 Club; North Carolina State Senator Dave Craven; Captain Shaun McAndrew USN (RET), President US Naval Academy Alumni Association, Triangle Chapter; and North Carolina State Senator Michael Lee.



USS Charlotte SSN 766 Updates

Navy vs Charlotte 49ers

In October, the Naval Academy football team visited Charlotte to play the UNC Charlotte 49ers. To the delight of the spectators, the Commanding Officer of the *USS Charlotte SSN 766*, Commander Anthony Stranges USN, welcomed the audience via a pre-recorded greeting played on the stadium Jumbotron.

In a pre-game ceremony, ensigns flown over the 766 were presented to the UNC Charlotte Chancellor, Dr. Sharon Gaber, by North Carolina State Representative Jason Saine; to the North Carolina Submarine Museum Foundation (Chris Perrien representing) by North Carolina State Senator Dave Craven; and to Charlotte Fire



Department Chiefs Shawn Royall and Bill Suthard by USNA Superintendent Fred Katcher USN.

USS Asheville SSN 758 Updates

Based in Apana, Guam, our ASHEVILLE reliably patrols that important and sometimes contentious area of the Pacific Region. It's a busy time for our Submarine Service as the new year began with all of North Carolina's three name-sake submarines deployed and on patrol in defense of our great nation. For sure, it's a busy time for the 758 families and they find ways to support one another while having fun amidst the sometimes unpredictable circumstances.

You may request to join the [FRG Facebook Group here](#).



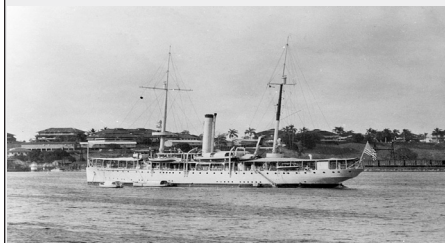
On Patrol over the holidays, the 758 Family Readiness Group assembled 100 Christmas Boxes for the single sailors aboard the *USS Asheville*.

PG-21 DEDICATION

On March 3, 2024 in Asheville's Historic Riverside Cemetery, the 162-man crew of the first *USS Asheville* will be commemorated with the unveiling of a monument in their honor.

Admiral Samuel Cox USN (RET), Director of the Navy History and Heritage Command at the Navy Yard in Washington, D.C. will be the Guest of Honor.

Joining the ceremony will be representatives of the Mayor's Office, Asheville Fire Department, Submarine Veterans of North Carolina, US Naval Academy Alumni Association and citizens of Asheville and Buncombe County.



Read more about the history of PG-21 >

For additional information, please visit the [NC Submarine Foundation website](#)

For more information about the SSN 777 Club, visit our [website](#) and [LinkedIn page](#).

On Eternal Patrol Memorial Reef is Complete

Since 1915, 65 American submarines have gone missing, in all representing more than 4,000 lost officers and crew members. Eternal Reefs and our partners Reef Innovations and The Reef Ball Foundation set out to honor these lost boats with a proper memorial in the environment in which they served – the sea. The On Eternal Patrol Memorial Reef is a group of 67 reef balls, each weighing approximately 1,800 pounds, one for each of the 65 missing submarines marked with a plaque indicating the name of boat, best known last location and loss of life. An additional two reef balls honor the USSVI (United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., important partners with us for this project) and all others in the submarine service lost in non-sinking incidents. The reef balls all face west and are organized in rows and columns, following protocol at Arlington National Cemetery.

The Inaugural Dedication

Despite threatening weather from subtropical storm Alberto, the On Eternal Patrol Memorial Reef dedication on May 27, 2018, was a wonderful event honoring the 65 lost American submarines and the 4,000+ officers and crew who remain On Eternal Patrol. We at Eternal Reefs, Reef Innovations and the Reef Ball Foundation sincerely appreciate everyone who attended this Memorial Day weekend event.

Full military honors were bestowed at the dedication with middle school student docents from Sarasota Military Academy Prep School presenting folded flags to retired submariners. Each reef features a bronze plaque noting the boat's name, loss of life, the sub's best-known location of loss and the state responsible for commemorating the sub, if applicable. Of the 65 submarines that never returned from duty, nine were lost prior to WWII, 52 submarines were lost during WWII, and four submarines were lost since the end of WWII. Two additional reef balls are in the project: one recognizing the United States Submarine Veterans, Inc. (USSVI) and, the pinnacle reef commemorating the entire project and those crews and boats lost in non-sinking accidents. No cremated remains are included in the 67 reef balls contained in the On Eternal Patrol Memorial Reef. As of Veterans Day 2019 when we held an underwater ribbon cutting, the On Eternal Patrol Memorial Reef was complete. For more information visit: [Eternal Reefs](#)





**Eternal Patrol Notice - William D. McCormick QM2/SS
January 7th, 2024**

Bill was on the SS-421 Trutta 61-63 Qualified in 62

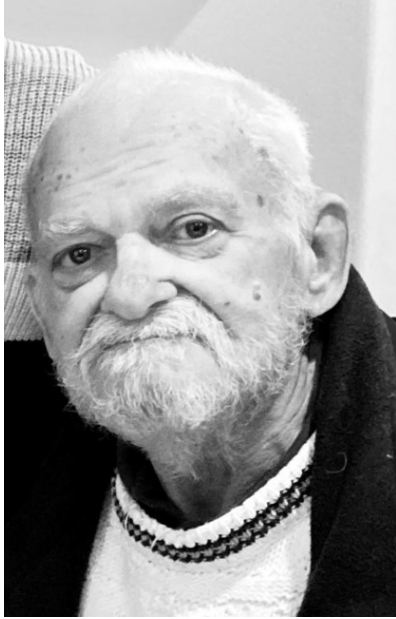
SS-287 Bowfin 63-66

Joined USSVI 2014

Nat Greene storekeeper 2017- 2020

Eternal Patrol - January 7th, 2024

Those who attended his Celebration of Life hosted by his wife Sally learned Bill was a licensed pilot and attended the Iditarod dog sled race in Alaska.



Theodore Sevasin Keen, 82, of Cary, NC passed away February 6, 2024. He was born July 4, 1941 in New Jersey, the son of Gladys and George Sevasin.

Ted was raised by Eleanor Keen of Rehoboth Beach, DE and grew up with her daughter, Duane Busbee and granddaughter, Susan Busbee Smith, all who predeceased him.

He was a 1960 graduate of Rehoboth High School and a submariner in the US Navy for 10 years. He served aboard the 1945 vintage USS Dogfish (SS350) and the 1965 era SSBN656 G W Carver, an early Boomer. He was a member of the Carver's Commissioning Crew. Later during a brief period of shore duty, he was an instructor at US Submarine Base Groton, CT.

Ted's civilian career was in the computer field. At various times he was a technician, programmer, and instructor. He worked for Control Data Corp. in MD and at the former NADC in Warminster, PA. He retired from the FDIC in Washington, DC. At age 45, Ted was located by his biological family including his mother, her husband, 2 brothers and wives, a half sister and husband, nieces, and nephews. Some years later he found another half sister.

He was a member of US Submarine Veterans Inc., South County Moose in Shady Side, MD and the Deale MD Elks' Lodge. An Elk for 22 years, he was a multi term Lodge President, and a Vice President for the Southwest District of the MD, DE, DC Elks' Association.

Ted's special interests were his friendships and travelling, exploring 49 states. His favorite destination was Key West.

He is predeceased by his mother, Gladys Needam, her husband, Charles, brother, Robert Sevasin and his wife Susan, and his father, George Sevasin.

Surviving him are Kay Hudson Keen, his daughter, Steffani Koprowski (Stan), grandson, Kelvin (Nikie) (all of NC), grandson Colton of MN, and brother, Carl Sevasin (Robbie), half sister, Charlene Young (all of TX), and half sister, Louise Braddock of NJ.

LOST SUBMARINES - SECOND QUARTER

APRIL

USS Pickerel (SS-177)	Lost on April 3, 1943 with the loss of 74 men while on her 7th war patrol near the eastern coast of northern Honshu, sunk by a depth charge attack.
USS Snook (SS-279)	Lost on April 8, 1945 with the loss of 84 men while on her 9th war patrol off the east coast of northern Formosa. Her loss remains a mystery, but she may have been sunk by a Japanese submarine.
USS Thresher (SSN-593)	Lost on April 10, 1963 with the loss of 112 crew members and 17 civilian technicians during deep-diving exercises. 15 minutes after reaching test depth, she communicated with USS Skylark that she was having problems. Skylark heard noises "like air rushing into an air tank" - then, silence. Photos taken by Trieste proved Thresher had broken up in 1,400 fathoms of water, some 220 miles east of Boston.
USS Gudgeon (SS-211)	Lost on April 18, 1944 with the loss of 79 men while on her 12th war patrol and most likely due to a combined air and surface antisubmarine attack north of the Mariana Islands.
USS Grenadier (SS-210)	Lost on April 22, 1943 with no immediate loss of life while on her 6th war patrol in the Lem Voalan Strait west of Malaysia. She dove after being spotted by a plane, but was badly damaged by a bomb. After fighting back to the surface with no propulsion, she was attacked by another plane, which her crew shot down. When enemy ships arrived, the CO abandoned ship and scuttled the boat. 76 crew members were taken prisoner, 4 perished and 72 survived the war.

May

USS Lagarto (SS-371)	Lost on May 3, 1945 with the loss of 86 men while on her 2nd war patrol. She is believed to have been lost to a radar equipped minelayer, which was then sunk by the USS Hawkbill two weeks later. Lagarto's wreckage has been located in the Gulf of Thailand.
USS Scorpion (SSN-589)	USS Scorpion (SSN-589) Lost on May 22, 1968 with the loss of 99 men while returning to Norfolk, VA from a Mediterranean deployment. The exact cause of her loss has never been determined and her wreckage has been located about 400 miles southwest of the Azores.
USS Squalus (SS-192)	Lost on May 23, 1939 due to a catastrophic valve failure during a test dive off the Isle of Shoals. 26 men drowned in the after compartments, 33 crew members were rescued. Later Squalus was raised and recommissioned as the USS Sailfish.
USS Stickleback (SS-415)	During a training exercise with USS Silverstein (DE-534) on May 28, 1958, Stickleback experienced a loss of power and broached 200 yards in front of the Silverstein resulting in a collision with no loss of life. Stickleback sunk the next day, May 29, 1958.

June

USS Herring (SS-233)	Lost on June 1, 1944 with the loss of 83 men while on her 8th war patrol near Matsuwa Island, Kuriles. She was conducting a surface attack when a shore battery spotted her and made two direct hits on her conning tower and causing her loss.
USS R-12 (SS-89)	Lost on June 12, 1943 with the loss of 42 men during a practice torpedo approach. The cause was probably due to flooding through a torpedo tube. The CO and two other men on the bridge survived, as did 18 crew members on liberty at the time of the accident. R-12's wreckage has been located off Key West, FL.
USS Golet (SS-361)	Lost on June 14, 1944 with the loss of 82 men while on her 2nd war patrol. She was apparently lost in battle with antisubmarine forces north of Honshu, Japan.
USS Bonefish (SS-223)	Lost on June 18, 1945 with the loss of 85 men while on her 8th war patrol in Toyama Bay off the northern shores of Honshu, Japan. After sinking a passenger-cargoman, Bonefish was subjected to a savage depth charge attack.

USS S-27 (SS-132)	Lost on June 19, 1942 with no loss of life while on her 1st war patrol when it grounded off Amchitka Island in the Aleutians. She was on the surface in poor visibility, charging batteries and drifted into the shoals. When she could not be freed and started listing, the captain got the entire crew to shore, 400 yards away, in relays using a 3-man rubber raft. The entire crew was then rescued by PBY aircraft.
USS O-9 (SS-70)	Lost on June 20, 1941 with the loss of 33 men when it foundered off Isle of Shoals, 15 miles from Portsmouth, NH.
USS Runner (SS-275)	Lost on or after June 26, 1943 with the loss of 78 men while on her 3rd war patrol. Prior to her loss, she reported sinking ships off the Kuriles, north of Japan on June 26 and is expected to have hit a mine on or after that date. She was expected at Midway about July 11, and not later than July 15.