



May 22, 2023

**SUBJECT: NCSM Foundation SitRep**

Ahoy All,

Welcome to the summer holiday season.

**Asheville SSN 758**

- After her well-reported Perth, Australia visit in March, the *Asheville* continued on patrol in the Pacific and is home in Guam.
- In April, Dr. Julie Lockwood, fiancée of CDR Tom Dixon, 758 CO, presented the Mayor's Office with US Postal Covers commemorating the *Ashevilles* in naval service. Event attended by Asheville Fire Chiefs who commit to supporting the 758.

**Charlotte SSN 766**

- Plenty of local ops in and out of Pearl Harbor. May or may not deploy in fall depending upon fleet schedule.
- In late March, Whit McDowell, our Foundation's Treasurer, and I met with representatives of the Charlotte Fire Department (long-time supporters of the 766) and the local and national chapters of the Sub Vets Association. All are willing and eager to support the 766 and its Family Readiness Group.
- While in Pearl Harbor in late April, I met with Captain Tony Stranges, the XO, LCDR. Brian Juskiewicz; and the Chief of the Boat, COB, Master Chief Mike Rodriguez (photo attached) and enjoyed a luncheon with both the *Charlotte* and *North Carolina* Family Readiness Groups.

**North Carolina 777**

- The *North Carolina* is preparing for a six-month deployment which requires a fair amount of time at sea in the local operating area for crew training and systems testing.
- While in Pearl Harbor, I enjoyed dinner with the XO, LCDR Chris Whitley; the COB, Master Chief Alex Jones; and Jessica Jones, who coordinates the 1/2 Way Box Project.
- We've contributed to the 1/2 Way Box Campaign as organized at Amazon by our 777 Club (Gray, Alex and Andy) and the *North Carolina's* Family Readiness Group.
- Crew members visited Wilmington for Navy Week in mid-April, meeting with the 777 Club and Kids Making It.



### **What's Coming-Up? Good News!**

The Naval Academy's football team will play at the UNC Charlotte 49ers over its Homecoming Weekend on October 14, 2023.

- Working with the UNCC Marketing, 766 Command and SubPac Public Affairs Office for a video message from the 766 to be played at the game.
- Intending to take advantage of the game to host a simple NCSM event for friends and potential Charlotte area supporters. Will coordinate our activity with USNA Alumni Chapter and USNA Parents Club of North Carolina.

### **PROJECT PG-21: Commemoration Ceremony in Asheville on March 3, 2024**

Did you know that there have been 4 US Navy ships named after the city of Asheville, 3 Patrol Gun-Boats and the SSN 758? I learned of the PG-21's valiant heritage when I met this past fall with Admiral Sam Cox, Director of the Naval History and Heritage Command at the Navy Yard in Washington, DC. Directly across the room from his desk and above the guest couch is a portrait of the PG-21 entitled *Asheville's Defiance*.

The net of her brave story is that after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese fleet intended to fully secure the Pacific region by eliminating the outdated allied fleet (former US Asiatic Fleet). On March 3, 1942, the *Asheville* alone encountered 3 Japanese combatants, two destroyers and a cruiser. In 30 minutes of battle, Japanese officers estimated that they fired 300 rounds into the *Asheville* before sinking her. Although significantly out-gunned, PG-21, a World War 1 vintage river patrol craft, in the words of Admiral Cox, "showed the enemy that the American Navy was going to put up a fight."

All 162 hands but one were lost, including 5 Academy graduates, at a location estimated to be 300 miles south of Java. The crew member who was permitted to survive the sinking was taken prisoner and died in a POW camp in 1945. He relayed the PG-21 story to another POW who survived the war.

Although there is a nice display in Asheville City Hall of the naval heritage of the city, there is no monument in town to the crew of the PG-21. In partnership with the Asheville city government and the historic Riverside Cemetery, our Foundation initiated Project PG-21 where on March 3, 2024, the 82nd anniversary of loss of the *USS Asheville* PG-21, a memorial ceremony with monument dedication will be conducted. Admiral Cox intends to be our Guest Speaker. Event details to follow.

I'll follow-up in June with details regarding an updated plan of action for Site Selection, Building Design, STEM Exhibits & Sponsors and Project Promotion.



Overall, I believe that we are about one year ahead of our five-year plan of action largely due to the caliber of our idea, the quality of our extended team and the timing of our project.

Best for Memorial Day Weekend. Spare a thought for those who've gone before us, please.

Go Navy!

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*USS Charlotte* command with Christopher Perrien in Hawaii (from left): LCDR Ted Stranges, Christopher Perrien, Executive Officer Brian Juskiewicz, Master Chief Mike Rodriguez