

Quarterly News

Happy New Year, 777 Club and Friends!

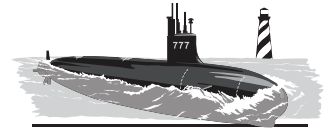
What an exciting end to the year for 777. Clearly the headline for the current deployment was the portcall to HMAS Stirling in Perth, Western Australia. While our USS ASHEVILLE called there just five months earlier, NORTH CAROLINA's visit came soon after the announcement of the AUKUS defense partnership 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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"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](#).



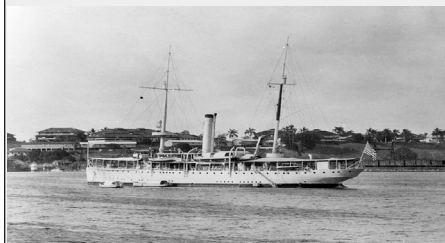
On Patrol over the holidays, the 758 Family Readiness Group assembled 100 Christmas Boxes for the single sailors aboard the *USS Asheville*.

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](#).