



# Boys of the Battleship North Carolina

*Cindy Horrell Ramsey*

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## **Boys of the Battleship North Carolina** Cindy Horrell Ramsey

On July 11, 1942, the USS North Carolina steamed into Pearl Harbor. She was a magnificent ship—the first in a new class of battleships, simultaneously monstrous and fast. She was two and a half football fields long and so wide she could barely pass through the Panama Canal on her journey to Hawaii. At any given time, 2,339 sailors manned the ship—a total of more than 7,000 during the six years she served. As she glided into the ravaged harbor, past the wreckage of sunken American ships, the morale of the men in the surviving Pacific fleet soared.

A little over two years earlier, more than 57,000 people had gathered in the Brooklyn Navy Yard on the day she was launched. As she went through her "shakedown" period, she returned repeatedly to that same naval yard for adjustments and modifications. Many New Yorkers, including radio commentator Walter Winchell, often witnessed the ship entering and departing New York Harbor and began calling her the "Showboat."

In this book, Ramsey tells the story of the battleship through the eyes of the men who served her. After doing research about the ship at the National Archives in 2000, Ramsey spent six days helping the staff of the memorial compile a living-history archive of personal interviews conducted with the surviving crewmembers when they attended the ship's annual reunion. She became fascinated with the stories these men told. For the next few years, she continued talking to the men to flesh out their stories. The result is this narrative about one of the most decorated American battleships in World War II, as seen through the eyes of the young sailors who matured into men while manning this floating fortress.

As Ramsey says in her introduction, "Sailors know the difference between a fairy tale and a sea story. A fairy tale begins, 'Once upon a time.' A sea story starts simply, 'Now, this is no bull....' This book is a sea story."

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