

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic USS North Carolina

and/or common

2. Location

street & number West bank of the Cape Fear River not for publication

city, town Wilmington vicinity of Seventh congressional district

state North Carolina code 037 county New Hanover code 129

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum/memorial
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name State of North Carolina
USS North Carolina Battleship Commission
c/o Captain F.S. Conlon USN (Ret.)

street & number P.O. Box 417

city, town Wilmington vicinity of North Carolina state 28402

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. New Hanover County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Wilmington vicinity of North Carolina state 28402

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Wilmington Historic District has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1974 federal state county local

depository for survey records Survey & Planning Branch, North Carolina Division of Archives & History

city, town Raleigh vicinity of North Carolina state 27601

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The main battery turrets have 16" face plates, 9.9" sides, 11.8" backs and 7.8" tops. Barbette armor ranges from 14.7" forward through 16" on the sides to 11.5" centerline aft. The five inch mounts are encased in 1.95" STS plates.

Side protection is also furnished by a series of compartments which features a prominent blister well below the waterline. There are five such compartments. The two outboard, including the blister, were kept void. The two inboard were liquid loaded, while the innermost compartments were also kept void. At the extremities there was only one outboard void compartment. Compared to earlier battleships, North Carolina had good capability for rapid counterflooding to maintain stability. This was put to the test September 15, 1942 when she was torpedoed off Guadalcanal. Within five minutes a 5½ degree list was corrected and the ship resumed the task force speed of 25 knots.

Adequate bottom protection was considered impossible to attain. Consequently, only limited bottom protection was furnished by two layers of compartments tanks totaling 5'9" deep. The lower layer, 3" deep, was kept liquid loaded while the upper layer was kept void at all times.

The propulsion plant consists of eight Babcock and Wilcox, 575 psi boilers operating at 850 F with integral superheat. There are four General Electric geared turbines capable of operating at approximately 5,000 RPM delivering a total of 121,000 shaft horsepower. The ship's maximum speed was 28 knots. Four ship's service 1,250 KW turbo generators, four ship's service 800 KW diesel generators and two 200 KW emergency diesel generators have a total capacity of 8,400 KW 450 volt AC.

From contract design through modifications during construction and alterations based on wartime operations the characteristics changes as shown below.

	<u>CONTRACT</u>	<u>FINAL (1945)</u>
Standard displacement	35,000 tons	36,600 tons
Full load displacement	42,330 "	46,700 "
Waterline length	714"	713' 5.25"
Waterline beam	104' 3"	104' 6"
Draft, mean	31' 6"	31' 7.3"
Shaft Horsepower	115,000	121,000
Maximum speed	27.5 kts	28 kts

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1937, 1940-1942

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The U.S.S. North Carolina (BB-55), authorized by Congress in 1936 and commissioned on April 9, 1941, was the first modern battleship built by the United States after the Washington Armament Conference of 1922 and the first in the American fleet to incorporate new ship-building technology. Over 728 feet long and with a normal displacement of 35,000 tons, the North Carolina was considered the most powerful warship afloat and struck such a majestic figure that it was, and still is, called "Showboat." The vessel participated in virtually all the major campaigns in the Pacific theatre including Guadalcanal, 1942; Battle of the Eastern Solomons, 1942; Gilbert Islands, 1943; Marshall Islands, 1943; Asiatic-Pacific Raids, 1944; Western New Guinea, 1944; Marianais, 1945; Leyte, 1944; Luzon, 1945; Iwo Jima; Okinawa Gunto; Third Fleet Operations against Japan, 1945. She was awarded twelve battle stars and reported sunk on six different occasions by "Tokyo Rose." The development of air power during World War II signaled the end of the era of battleships and following the war the vessels were either "moth balled" or scrapped. The U.S.S. North Carolina, through the efforts of Governor Terry Sanford, former governor and United States Secretary of Commerce Luther Hodges, and the Battleship Commission, was saved from a similar fate. Installed in a permanent slip in Wilmington, the U.S.S. North Carolina was dedicated on April 29, 1962 as a monument to the heroism of the men and women who served in World War II.

Although the battleship U.S.S. North Carolina is less than fifty years old it is of exceptional significance as a vivid reminder of World War II, an example of precedent setting military design and engineering technology, and as a memorial dedicated to the men and women of all the United States military services in World War II.

Criteria Assessment:

- A. Through its participation in the naval war in the Pacific against Japan, the U.S.S. North Carolina is directly associated with and was a factor in the conduct of World War II.
- B. The U.S.S. North Carolina is associated with the lives of the more than 2,000 crewmen and commanding officers who served aboard her as well as being a memorial to all American service personnel in World War II.
- C. The U.S.S. North Carolina was the first modern battleship built by the United States after World War I and as the most powerful vessel afloat set the standard for the class and incorporated new shipbuilding technology.

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Continuation sheet HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Item number 8

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The Navy launched North Carolina on June 13, 1940, under the sponsorship of Miss Isabel Hoey, daughter of North Carolina Governor Clyde R. Hoey. It commissioned the battlewagon on April 9, 1941, and placed Captain Olaf M. Hustvedt in command. After the commissioning ceremony, Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox declared:

North Carolina is one of a new line of ships that will give the United States unchallenged supremacy on the seas. America has no aggressive designs on any power on earth. The United States is still dedicated to peace. But at long last we are convinced that peace and security can be had only by building a fleet with such strength that no one will want to challenge it. . . .

Many authorities considered the newly-commissioned North Carolina "the most powerful warship afloat." She was over 728 feet long and had a normal displacement of 35,000 tons. Her designed speed was 27 knots and her crew consisted of 108 officers and 1,772 enlisted men. Originally she was armed with nine 16-inch .45 caliber guns, sixteen 5-inch .38 caliber guns; four quadruple 1.1 inch gun mounts, and sixteen .50 caliber machine guns. Subsequently sixty 40 mm. guns in quad mounts and thirty-six 20 mm. guns were added to her armament. She had two plane catapults aft, and the maximum thickness of her armor was 18 inches.⁵

The new ship struck such a majestic figure as it passed in and out of New York harbor for trials, that it came to be called "Showboat"—a nickname it has retained until the present day. In September, 1941, North Carolina went on her shakedown cruise and had returned to New York when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and thus drew the United States into World War II. After training and gunnery practice the ship left Norfolk on June 5, 1942, bound for the war in the Pacific.

There North Carolina was to spend almost three-and-a-half years. Forty months of this time was in the combat zone. The vessel participated in virtually all the major campaigns in that theater after its arrival in the Pacific. It won twelve battle stars in the following operations: Guadalcanal-Tulagi Landings, 1942; Battle of the Eastern Solomons, 1942; Gilbert Islands, 1943; Marshall Islands, 1943; Asiatic-Pacific Raids, 1944; Western New Guinea, 1944; Marianas, 1945; Leyte, 1944; Luzon, 1945; Iwo Jimo, 1945; Okinawa Gunto; Third Fleet Operations against Japan, 1945. She was also awarded the Philippine Republic Presidential Unit Citation and the Navy Occupation Service Medal. The war propagandist Tokyo Rose reported her sunk on six different occasions. Although these reports of sinkings were false, the ship did sustain damage from air attack and was torpedoed during the Guadalcanal operation. Nevertheless after the torpedoe struck, the stout ship withstood the explosion (a tribute to her design), and her courageous crew corrected the list of the vessel and maintained her station in the battle formation. The ship subsequently underwent repairs at Pearl Harbor.⁶

After the war and a brief tour with the occupation forces in Japan, North Carolina departed for home and reached Boston Harbor on October 17, 1945. She was overhauled in the Brooklyn Naval Yard and then embarked on a Carribean training cruise for the midshipmen of Annapolis. She returned to New York and was decommissioned there on June 27, 1947.⁷

Ironically the war which brought fame to North Carolina also spelled the end of battleships as weapons of naval warfare. During World War II air power and the newly developed aircraft carriers revealed the fallibility of battleships. In a sea battle airplanes launched from carriers could strike faster and at positions out of range of

9. Major Bibliography / References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Approximately 10 acres

Quadrangle name Wilmington, NC

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	8	2	2	7	7	2	0	3	7	9	2	1	4	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

B

1	8	2	2	8	0	1	0	3	7	9	2	1	5	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

C

1	8	2	2	8	0	6	0	3	7	9	2	0	6	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

D

1	8	2	2	7	7	3	0	3	7	9	2	0	3	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

E

Zone		Easting						Northing						

F

Zone		Easting						Northing						

G

Zone		Easting						Northing						

H

Zone		Easting						Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

The property included in this nomination is the battleship USS North Carolina and its permanent slip located within the Battleship Memorial Park. This area is shown in red on the attached real property map #47 for the county of New Hanover, North Carolina.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries N/A

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Captain F.S. Conlon, USN (Ret.), Director USS North Carolina Commission
Davyd Foard Hood, Survey Specialist Joe A. Mobley, Researcher
Survey and Planning Branch

organization Archeology and Historic Preservaion Section date April 9, 1981

North Carolina Division of Archives and History

street & number 109 East Jones Street telephone (919) 733-6545

city or town Raleigh state North Carolina 27611

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature William S. Price, Jr.

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date May 29, 1981

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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Continuation sheet

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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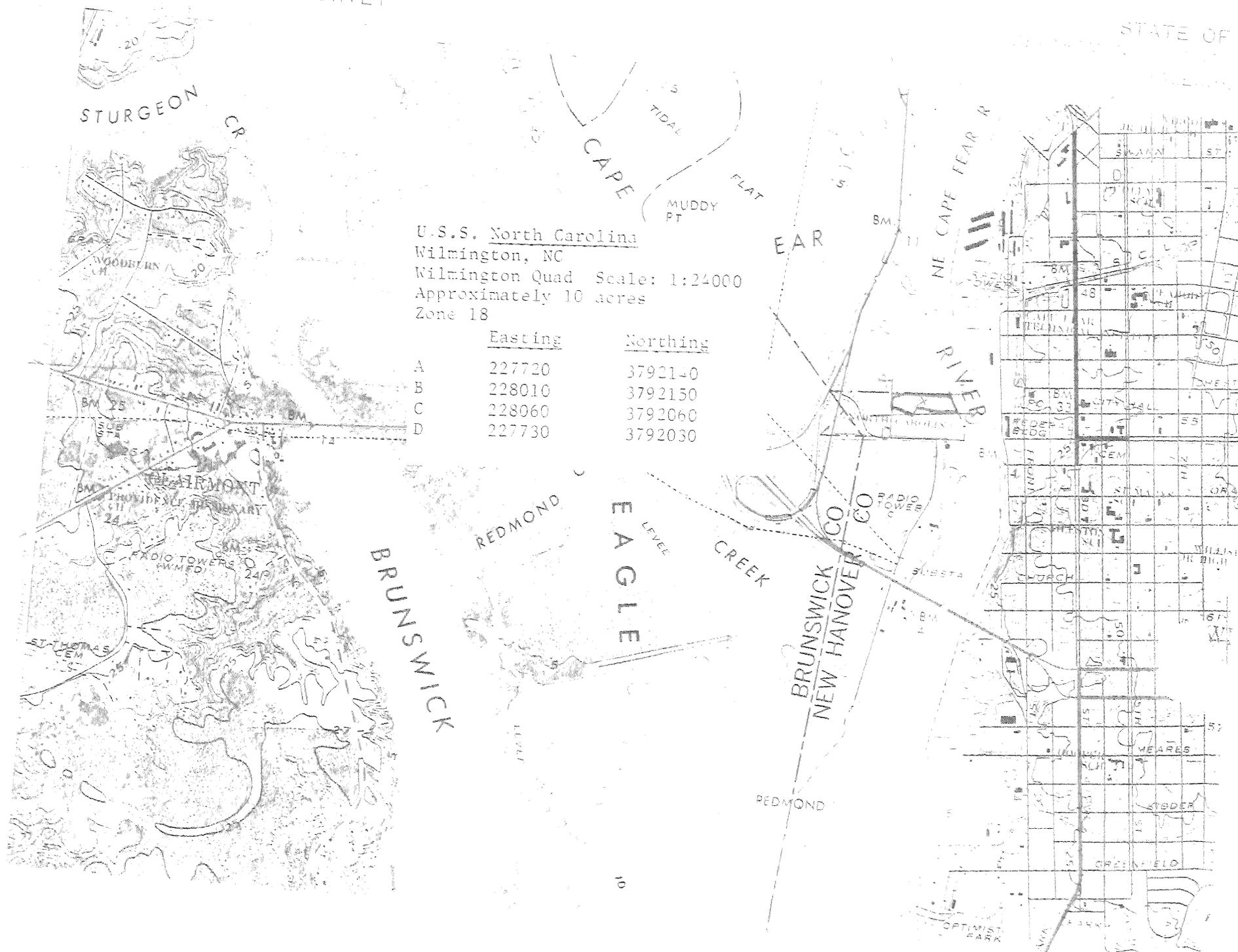
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Pater, Alan F. (ed.). United States Battleships: The History of America's Greatest Fighting Fleet. Beverly Hills: Monitor Book Company, 1968.

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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

STATE OF



U.S.S. North Carolina
Wilmington, NC
Wilmington Quad Scale: 1:24000
Approximately 10 acres
Zone 18

	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
A	227720	3792140
B	228010	3792150
C	228060	3792060
D	227730	3792030

BRUNSWICK

REDMOND

EAGLE

BRUNSWICK
NEW HANOVER CO

REDMOND

NE CAPE FEAR R

EAR

CAPE

MUDDY PT

TIDAL

FLAT

STURGEON CR

WOODBURN

FARMONT

RADIO TOWERS

ST THOMAS

RADIO TOWER

QUESTA





J. Blow /penumbra