NARRATIVE

'1968' HISTORY

of the

USS NEW JERSEY BB-62
I'm a Fighting Ship,
this is my story,
Down through the years,
It hasn't all been Glory.

But I've lived a long time,
and to you I say,
that most of my time
was in Harms Way.

My guns have fired
to right a wrong.
My crew has joined
their voice in song.

I've traveled this Ocean
thousands of miles.
Many different lands
Have seen American smiles.

But all of us sometime
have to stop for a rest
I went for mine
knowing I was the best.

I was given a spot
along side these piers
and here I've sat
through all these years.

My crew all left
things got so quiet
memories came alive
throughout long nights.

Youth has fled
steel muscles were tired
my guns sat silent
a long time unfired.

Each day I hoped
it seemed in vain
that someone would come
for me again.

My empty space
would softly call
my decks awaited
that first footfall.

UNCLASSIFIED
CHRONOLOGY OF OUTSTANDING EVENTS

18 March----------------------Crew Moved Aboard.

26-28 March-------------------Machinery Trials.

6 April------------------------Recommissioning.

15-18 April-------------------Inspection and Survey.

16 May------------------------Departed Philadelphia for West Coast via Panama Canal.

20-29 May---------------------Calibration firing and in port, Norfolk, Virginia.

4 June------------------------Transit Panama Canal.

11 June------------------------Arrived homeport of Long Beach, California.

17 June-26 July---------------Refresher Training.

29 July-2 August-------------Advanced Training.

2-27 August-------------------Yard Availability and Pre­Deployment Inspections, Long Beach.

28-29 August-------------------Ammunition loadout, Seal Beach.

30 August---------------------Family Cruise.

5 September-------------------Underway for Western Pacific Deployment.

9-11 September---------------In port, Pearl Harbor.

22-25 September-------------In port, Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines.

30 September----------------Fired first rounds into DMZ.

30 September-8 November---On station, Vietnam.

10-21 November-------------In port, Subic Bay.

23 November-9 December------Naval gunfire support, South Vietnam.
10-13 December--In port, Subic Bay.
15 December--Crossed Equator.
16-20 December--In port, Singapore.
22-31 December--Naval gunfire support, South Vietnam.
In August of 1967, the decision was made to commission NEW JERSEY for the third time, this time to serve for the duration of hostilities in Southeast Asia. The program change decision which approved the activation of the battleship was "for employment in the Pacific Fleet to augment the naval gunfire support force in Southeast Asia". The real motivation behind the activation was that "a major calibre gunfire support ship is necessary if we are to continue, after October 1968, the present deployment level of two such ships (major calibre gunfire support) in Southeast Asia". Much has been said as to why the Secretary of Defense chose the battleship over another eight-inch cruiser. Some contend it was because the 16-inch guns have a greater range and pack a more powerful punch. This was not the rationale of the Secretary of Defense. His primary contention was that the battleship was significantly harder, i.e., less vulnerable than the eight-inch cruiser. Additionally, the Secretary's decision stated "analysis shows that the battleship with 16-inch guns provides greater effectiveness for equal cost than the cruiser with eight-inch guns in this limited mission (naval gunfire support)".

There were four battleships in the Reserve Fleet. The decision to activate NEW JERSEY rather than any of the other three was non-political. NEW JERSEY was, in fact, in better material condition than any of the others. NEW JERSEY had had an extensive overhaul just prior to mothballing. MISSOURI had a speed restriction as a result of the grounding off Norfolk. WISCONSIN had had a fire forward of the wardroom in the fire control tower support, which destroyed much of the electrical wiring vital for fire control.

Some controversy has also surrounded NEW JERSEY's mission. NEW JERSEY was activated for a single purpose and a single mission. "The battleship's sole mission will be shore bombardment", stated the program change decision. It was intended by the Secretary that the activation and installation of equipment would be based on independent operation, as a non-flagship. Activation was also to be based "upon the assumption that the ship will be mothballed upon termination of hostilities in Southeast Asia", and for a useful life of three years. Activation and equipment and outfitting decisions were fully in accordance with the intent of those directives.

It has been said that the activation was austere. The Secretary, in fact, used that word in his program change decision. Twenty-seven million dollars was authorized for
activation, alteration and procurement of newly installed equipment. Only about $21 million was actually expended.

The existing stockpile of 16-inch shells and powder was reworked to ensure availability for the first few deployments of NEW JERSEY. The initial schedule in the summer of 1967 was for NEW JERSEY to be on station off the coast of Vietnam, as part of the naval gunfire support force in Southeast Asia, prior to the end of September 1968 and to remain during the northeast monsoon season for a period of six months ending in March 1969.

The most controversial item concerning NEW JERSEY was how many officers and enlisted men would be required to man the ship efficiently and effectively. The Navy's initial request was reduced by the Office of the Secretary of Defense to a maximum of 1,400 enlisted and 70 officers. The Navy disagreed and requested an additional 227 enlisted men. This reclamation was not approved and the 1,400 enlisted ceiling was reaffirmed by Mr. Nitze, Deputy Secretary of Defense, on the 25th of November 1967.

This decision was modified four months later, however. In March 1968, as a result of a request by the Prospective Commanding Officer, and after lengthy negotiation with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, an increase of 156 enlisted men was authorized. This brought the authorized manning level to 1,556 enlisted men and 70 officers.

In reviewing the chronology of events, it is first worthy of note that the Department of Defense had set down a definite team schedule for the dreadnought's reactivation. In August 1967, she would be moved from her berth of 9 years, from between her gallant sisters, IOWA and WISCONSIN, to Drydock 3, and thence to Pier 6 in January. Here a force of 2,000 civilian shipyard employees would team up with the battleship's nucleus crew (200 enlisted men and the prospective heads of departments plus 40 officers) and work throughout the fall and winter, and have the mighty ship ready in the spring. Meanwhile, the balance crew was training on the West Coast, with the Prospective Executive Officer, Commander J. S. Elfelt.

While the days were devoted to rigorous training and drill, one of the highlights of the precommissioning detail was a dance held in the honor of NEW JERSEYMEN, at the Balboa Park Auditorium on 21 January 1968. Seven hundred men attended the party, which featured country and western and rock 'n roll bands. The main attraction, though, was an abundance of feminine pulchritude. A quick canvas of San Diego State
College and other local schools produced more than enough
dancing partners.

On 18 March, the balance crew would arrive in
Philadelphia and move aboard. Just eight days later, on 26
March, the ship would go to sea for the first time in 11
years. On 6 April, NEW JERSEY would be placed back in
commission by the Commandant, FOURTH Naval District.

On the 15th of that month the ship would perform sea
trials for the Board of Inspection and Survey, which would
include firing her big guns for the first time to verify her
structural integrity. On the 16th of May she would leave
Philadelphia, transit the Panama Canal on the 4th of June,
and arrive in her homeport of Long Beach, California on the
11th.

After a summer of shakedown and refresher training, NEW
JERSEY would depart Long Beach on 5 September and arrive off
the coast of Vietnam by the end of September 1968.

The men of NEW JERSEY, under the command of Captain J.
Edward Snyder, Jr., took this schedule as a challenge. Every
deadline was met and on 30 September, NEW JERSEY took station
in a gray dawn off the coast of Vietnam's Demilitarized Zone.
With the eyes of the world on her, at 0730, the battleship
unleashed the first 16-inch barrage fired in anger in over 15
years.

The road from Philadelphia to Vietnam had not been an
easy one. Many decisions had to be made. When the idea of
reactivating a battleship was conceived, it was intended only
to partially reactivate the ship and man her with a skeleton
crew. Would all the guns be reactivated? Would the entire
engineering plant be activated? In effect, would NEW JERSEY
serve as nothing more than a floating gun platform? This
question was answered on 18 January 1968 when the ship's
Prospective Commanding Officer, Captain J. Edward Snyder, Jr.,
called his officers together for his introductory remarks:
"Gentlemen, let there be no doubt in your minds. NEW JERSEY
will be a battleship and nothing less".

In addition to the nine 16-inch guns, the 20 five-inch
38's would be brought back into service. All eight boilers
and all four main engines would be activated. Work, which had
commenced in August of 1967, continued through the fall and
winter. By 1 January 1968, NEW JERSEY had begun to breathe
life. Guns were elevated and depressed. Directors could be
seen training and locking onto imaginary targets. Steam again
flowed through miles of pipe. The ship was a daily beehive of activity. Since the dreadnought's crew would number approximately one-half of the World War II complement, there would be more living space. Extra bunks were removed and remaining bunks were relocated to allow each man more living space. The benches were removed from the mess decks and four man tables were installed. Tile was laid on interior deck spaces to facilitate cleaning and cut down on man hours required for upkeep.

The loading that had begun in mid-January and which was to continue until deployment from Long Beach reached it's first milestone on 16 March with the moving aboard of the crew. A fully-operational crew's mess greeted them with a tasty traditional meal of roast beef. The refuse of a long yard period was cleaned up. Messing spaces were cleaned to spotless perfection. Yet as 26 March, the day the new crew would take the ship to sea for the first time, approached, the weather decks remained cluttered with air lines, water lines, steam lines and heavy equipment. A Philadelphia Bulletin writer, Mr. George Staab, visited the ship briefly the day before NEW JERSEY was to get underway. He expressed his doubt that the ship could be made ready in the short time remaining. "She'll be ready", the Captain assured him. And, she was.

At 0610, Tuesday, 26 March, the world's only active battleship edged slowly away from Pier Six, with the assistance of six tugs, and slipped into the main stream of the Delaware River. What would have been a routine evolution for any other ship was an historical event for NEW JERSEY. The cameras, microphones and pencils of 55 media representatives recorded the events of the day. Throughout that day and the next every system on the ship came under the careful scrutiny of 295 shipyard employees, the Shipyard Commander, Captain Floyd W. Gooch, and the officers and men of NEW JERSEY. At 0600 on the 27th, off the Virginia Capes, NEW JERSEY's engineers began building steam for a full power run, a brutal test of machinery that would extend the battleship to her fullest capacities. At 1039 the pit log read 30 knots. And there had been no casualties. Speed was reduced for a time while the crew ate lunch, and in the afternoon another high speed run was commenced--this one to be full power. The tension in the men's faces was evident, but the only words spoken were those of the officer of the deck and the lee helmsman. All engines were ahead flank. "Indicate 190 rpms", ordered the OOD.

"190 turns, aye...190 indicated and answered for", replied the lee helm.
More turns were added. 195...200...202. At 1547 the OOD ordered maximum turns, 207.

"Pit log reads 35.2 knots", said the lee helm. There were no casualties. NEW JERSEY kept up this tremendous speed for six hours, and when the Captain was satisfied with the performance of his engineering plant, he decided it was time for the final test: to place maximum strain on the plant by going from all ahead flank to all back emergency. Young crew members braced for a tremendous shock. But the Captain appeared confident as he watched the engine order telegraph.

When the order was given there was surprisingly little shock. One could feel the ship slowing, but gear did not tumble about and there were no shuddering vibrations. If anything was noticeable, it was the silence.

A smoke float had been dropped over the side at the instant of reversal to measure the ship's forward progress. It took two miles for the ship to go dead in the water and start to make sternway.

After the tests, a thorough inspection was made of the engineering plant. It checked out perfectly.

As the ship approached Pier Four, Philadelphia Naval Shipyard, at 1400 on Thursday, 28 March, Captain Snyder ordered a broom run up the halyard for all to see--the Navy's traditional symbol for a clean sweep.

Now the ship must be readied for the most significant step to date in her reactivation: the recommissioning. That she would rejoin the Fleet on 6 April was by now a well known fact; local and national news media had seen to that. Attendance at the ceremony would be by invitation only, and the number of requests was astounding--over 20,000. The requests came from as far away as Europe. Many were from former crew members, other battleship sailors, and Navy personnel--both active and retired. Some were from people who knew nothing more about NEW JERSEY than the tremendous nostalgia she invoked. NEW JERSEYMEN were at first surprised by the amount of public notice they received.

Captain Snyder analyzed it this way. "NEW JERSEY represents the best of both worlds. She combines the latest in technological advances with the glory of the past. NEW JERSEY is one of the few remaining symbols of a time when the United States was undisputably the world's greatest sea power.
There are still a great many Americans who would like to identify with this period in history."

Physical space at the ceremony was limited and invitations were sent out on a first-come, first-serve basis. About 10,000 people attended on a warm Saturday afternoon, the first truly fine day of the spring. Yet the mood of the day was somber, for that week Dr. Martin Luther King had been shot. Philadelphia, like the rest of the nation, was not over the shock. Nevertheless, the ship and her company were polished for the big day. Red, white and blue bunting draped from the lifelines and from the stage atop turret three, where the ceremony would take place. One could sense the excitement among the officers and men of NEW JERSEY and in the huge crowd gathered on the pier.

At 1415 the dignitaries began to arrive. Sharing the speaker's platform with Captain Snyder were: the Honorable Paul R. Ignatius, Secretary of the Navy; the Honorable Randolph S. Driver, Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower); the Honorable Robert A. Frosch, Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research and Development); Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, Chief of Naval Operations; General Leonard F. Chapman, Jr., Commandant of the Marine Corps; Admiral Ephraim P. Holmes, Commander in Chief Atlantic; Vice Admiral John B. Colwell, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Fleet Operations and Readiness); Rear Admiral Robert H. Speck, Commandant, FOURTH Naval District; Rear Admiral Edward J. Fahy, Commander, Naval Ships Systems Command; Brigadier General William C. Doyle, representing the Honorable Richard J. Hughes, Governor of New Jersey; and Captain Floyd W. Gooch, Jr., Commander, Philadelphia Naval Shipyard.

Promptly at 1425 the Navy Band began the USS NEW JERSEY March, composed especially for this day. NEW JERSEY's Senior Chaplain, Commander Harold D. Bodle, read the invocation as a hush came over the crowd. Captain Floyd W. Gooch, Jr., Commander, Philadelphia Naval Shipyard, pronounced the welcoming address. He was followed by Rear Admiral Speck.

Then the Honorable Mr. Ignatius stood at the podium for the address. Echoing the words of President Woodrow Wilson, spoken a half century ago, he said:

"...we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts--for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free
IN COMMISSION
peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free..."

And so the battleship, symbol of the might of a nation, was recommissioned to serve in a conflict of power and ideals in a small country in Southeast Asia. Soon the ship would be patrolling the shores of Vietnam, providing heavy gunfire support for allied troops engaged in a struggle "for the rights and liberties of small nations". Following the recommissioning directive by Rear Admiral Speck, Captain Snyder proudly read his orders and accepted command. He then directed the Executive Officer, Commander J. S. Elfelt, to set the first watch. A new era in the life of the dreadnought had begun.

With the commissioning, the ship now officially belonged to NEW JERSEYMEN. The men who had breathed life into the 58,000-ton dreadnought seemed to take a new pride in their ship. She was ready for sea. Engineering trials two weeks earlier had proved that. She looked fit. Paint was fresh and clean. The decks had been thoroughly cleaned of eight months of yard work. Her next test, and her final one before transiting to the West Coast, would be Inspection and Survey, commencing on 15 April.

On the 10th, NEW JERSEY hosted 475 members of the South Jersey Council of the Navy League for a tour of the ship and subsequent dinner in the mess decks. NEW JERSEYMEN, already accustomed to wide public notice and an influx of visitors, handled the visit expertly and the evening was a tremendous success.

On Easter Sunday, 14 April, the ship made final preparations for getting underway. During the morning Protestant Divine Worship and Catholic Mass were conducted on the main deck forward. At 1300, 16-inch powder was brought on board, the first in over 10 years; for Inspection and Survey would test all systems on the ship—including her big guns. Besides the Board of Inspection and Survey, headed by Rear Admiral John D. Bulkeley, another group of local and national news representatives would ride with the ship. What would be routine for any other Navy ship was an item of national interest with NEW JERSEY.

At 1000 on Monday, 15 April, NEW JERSEY once again slipped gently into the Delaware River for the 86 mile, eight hour trip to the Atlantic. The Inspection and Survey Board, comprised of Naval officers, all experts in their fields, would thoroughly scrutinize every aspect of the ship's
operation in order to determine her material readiness to carry out her assigned mission.

The highpoint of Inspection and Survey, and the high-
point of NEW JERSEY's reactivation to date, occurred at 1025 on the morning of 17 April off the Virginia Capes: the right gun of turret one, trained around to 110 degrees relative, belched flame and smoke as the first 16-inch projectile for over a decade left the gun muzzle of a U. S. battleship. A marked silence followed the blast as all eyes were trained on the horizon. About 40 seconds later a green splash appeared on the horizon as the projectile hit. The blind loaded and plugged projectile contained dye so impact could be readily observed. A total of 18 rounds were fired between 1025 and 1330 that day, all with the big barrels trained at extreme angles in order to place maximum strain on the ship's superstructure. Under normal circumstances 16-inch guns, which generate tremendous pressure, would be fired close to the beam. Inspection and Survey, however, tests a ship's maximum tolerances. And NEW JERSEY passed the test.

Life rafts were blown out of their racks aft and one accommodation ladder stowed on the portside just forward of turret three was blown apart. Several hats were lost over the side and one would-be photographer had his Instamatic shatter in his hands. There were no significant casualties, though, and NEW JERSEY had proved another phase of her readiness.

As the ship approached the channel to the Delaware River on the morning of 18 April, her helo deck and flight crew were tested for the first time as three helicopters from HC-4, Lakehurst, made several landings. Later in the day, as the ship moored portside to, Pier Four, the broom once again flew from the yardarm, indicative of another clean sweep. Shortly after mooring the INSURV critique, with Rear Admiral Bulkeley presiding, was held in the wardroom. It was, incidentally, the first INSURV critique of a major combatant in the Navy's history which was open to the press.

Admiral Bulkeley began, "You have a very fine ship and some of the finest officers and men I have seen in a long time". With the press paying close attention to every word, Admiral Bulkeley continued to praise the performance of the past four days. He summed up by saying there was no doubt in his mind that NEW JERSEY could and would perform her assigned mission in Southeast Asia in a creditable manner, and that the Navy had "received it's money's worth".
Shipboard work after Inspection and Survey seemed to take
on a different atmosphere. Whereas previously, much of the
work was major in scale and not normal to any other than a
ship under construction or undergoing a major overhaul, now
the daily routine seemed a little closer to just that: routine.
Interior spaces were scrubbed down daily. Bright work was
polished routinely. The crew now lived and ate all meals a­
board the ship. On 29 April Miss New Jersey (Miss America
contestant) Jeanette Phillipuk, joined Captain Snyder in ribbon­
cutting ceremonies opening our new walk-in ship's store which
featured $40,000 of merchandise ranging from the more mundane
necessity items to fancy cameras and numerous brands of
ladies perfume. This had been preceded by the opening of a
modernized soda fountain, a new tobacco shop, clothing and
small stores, and thoroughly modernized barber shops, the
lighting-off of four multi-flavor soft drink vending machines,
and the institution of laundry and tailor shop services. As
time passed into late April NEW JERSEY became less and less
dependent on shore services and more dependent upon the skills
and resources of her men. In nine months since being moved
out of her berth between IOWA and WISCONSIN, NEW JERSEY had
been transformed from 58,000 tons of steel to a living,
breathing ship. Color television sets were something new to
battleships, and at night, ports open to let in the warm
spring air, crew members could be found in compartments enjoy­
ing some well deserved rest. And there was always the
inevitable acey deucey and card games.

All talk now was of the upcoming transit. The event was
regarded with mixed emotion. For some NEW JERSEYMEMEN, it
meant seeing families and friends on the West Coast for the
first time in several months. For others it would mean saying
goodby to loved ones for at least a year. However one
regarded the trip, it would begin on the 16th day of May.

Meanwhile, the visits hosted by NEW JERSEY were spiral­
ing. Visiting, in fact seemed to become a major aspect of
the ship's daily routine during the last days in Philadelphia.
From the occasional visit in early March, the schedule grew
to include an average of two to three groups per day by late
April.

As April turned to May, final preparations were underway.
Boats and vehicles were brought aboard. Final touches were
put on yard work. Personal affairs were put in order. But
while all minds were on the trip west, NEW JERSEYMEMEN still had
time to think of a fellow human being in need. On Saturday,
20 April, the ship received a call from a Philadelphia man
seeking help. The wife of a close friend was in a local
hospital, dying for need of blood. The need was urgent. The man was desperate, and knew not where to turn. Then, a thought struck him. He had once been in the Navy, and he knew NEW JERSEY was in port. It might be worth a try.

The officer of the deck received the call at 1230. He passed word immediately. Although it was a weekend, with most of the crew on liberty, within ten minutes 17 sailors had assembled on the quarterdeck and were speeding to the hospital to come to the aid of someone none of them knew. The transfusions greatly improved the patient's health and she was soon taken off the danger list. The woman, Mrs. Ruth Rappaport, recovered from her illness shortly after the incident, and still corresponds regularly with the ship.

Sunday, 12 May, saw NEW JERSEY conduct her first day of limited invitational visiting. It was an ideal way to accommodate all those who wanted to visit the battleship before her departure from the East Coast. There simply weren't enough days left to be able to host each group wanting to tour the ship on an individual basis. About 1,200 people came aboard that day. It was NEW JERSEY's largest crowd to date, but nothing compared to what the future held.

The day soon arrived, and at 1145, NEW JERSEY got underway and glided down the Delaware River, leaving behind the place of her birth and her two proud sisters. Looking back on IOWA and WISCONSIN, one couldn't help but feel they would like to come too...to once again feel the elixirs of the Pacific slide under the keel, to once again take up the cause of freedom.

Again, NEW JERSEY played host to representatives of an admiring public. In what turned out to be the rule rather than the exception, six media representatives rode the ship from Philadelphia to Norfolk, Virginia. Routine training was conducted enroute, under the watchful eyes of the press, and a special guest, Federal Judge Talbot Smith from Detroit, an old friend of the Navy who passed away shortly after the trip. On Saturday, the 18th, an awards ceremony was held on the helo deck, wherein key members of the reactivation crew were recognized for outstanding contributions in getting the ship ready for combat. At 0500 on Monday, the 20th day of May, the special sea and anchor detail was set in preparation for entering port. This period would be strictly business as 2,500 tons of ammunition had to be loaded. No liberty was granted. The crew loaded around the clock for three days finishing the job at 2000 on the 22nd. The ship got underway immediately for the Virginia Capes operation area, where
calibration of the big guns would be conducted. The earlier tests in April had been structural only. Now NEW JERSEYMEN would learn how accurate the guns were after 11 years of idleness.

The following morning, with a CBS camera crew looking on, the tests began. Throughout the 23rd the ship fired: 46 five-inch blind loaded and plugged projectiles and 50 five-inch anti-aircraft common with 96 non-flashless powder charges; and 57 16-inch blind loaded and plugged projectiles, 23 with reduced powder charges and 34 full charges. Included in this firing were two full broadsides--nine gun salvos. The target was a sled towed by USS SHIKORA (ATF 162). For indirect fire NEW JERSEY's fire controlmen used USS REID (APD 119) as a reference.

On the morning of the 24th the ship conducted more five-inch firing, then headed back to Norfolk for some well deserved liberty. Coincidental to NEW JERSEY's last weekend in an East Coast port would be the first in a series of open houses.

General visiting, whereby the Naval Station and the ship would be open to the public, would run for two days--Saturday and Sunday, the 24th and 25th of May from 1300 to 1630. Before visiting on Saturday, the ship would host some special guests. At 0830 eight local mayors called on the Captain. At 0900 60 former crew members were hosted by NEW JERSEY's chief petty officers, and at 1000 200 NROTC students were aboard. By 1200 all the morning guests had departed and the crowds were beginning to line up at the head of the pier. NEW JERSEY was fully prepared to receive visitors. Extra brows had been set up. Two bands would entertain the guests as they waited on the pier. A tour route had been established. Emergency details were posted. Ample "Welcome Aboard" pamphlets had been printed in the ship's print shop and were ready for distribution. Gunnery and fire fighting displays were set up on the pier. Radioman first class George Stavros had prepared an oral description of NEW JERSEY's mission which he would deliver about each half hour from forward of turret one. At 1220 it was decided that nothing would be gained by having the huge crowd wait for the official opening time of 1300. The after brow was opened and visitors came streaming aboard--11,119 of them. The next day the same procedure was followed with 20,683 guests, for a weekend total of nearly 32,000.

At 0930 on the 29th of May, NEW JERSEY once again put to sea, this time headed south for the Panama Canal and the
Pacific. The first leg of the voyage took six days, and NEW JERSEY anchored on the Atlantic side the morning of 3 June at Cristobal. The boarding party then came aboard and plans were made for the actual transit which would commence at 0500 on the fourth and take 12 hours.

The Panama Canal, which had been designed with a width of 110 feet, had rubber fenders installed shortly after the Korean conflict. These fenders narrowed the locks down to 108 feet, two inches—one inch less than NEW JERSEY's beam. Fortunately the fenders were resilient, but it would indeed be a tight squeeze. The transit was made without incident and was brightened by the presence of several distinguished guests, among them Rear Admiral George P. Koch, Commandant, FIFTEENTH Naval District and Admiral Jose Moreira Maia, the Brazilian Chief of Naval Operations.

At 1700 on the 4th of June the ship moored starboard side to, Pier 15, Balboa, for an evening of liberty before getting underway for Long Beach in the morning. That evening 10 guests of the Secretary of the Navy and two Southern California newspapermen were embarked. And the Canal Zone Council of the Navy League of the United States hosted a cocktail party for ship's officers at Quarry Heights Officer's Club. The ship's officers returned the hospitality the next morning by inviting 1,400 Navy League members and their guests to tour the ship. Shortly after noon on the 5th, NEW JERSEY got underway and, under threatening skies, moved silently into the Pacific for a six-day voyage north to Long Beach.

This trip would be utilized for more underway training and gunnery calibration. To test the speed of his crew, Captain Snyder set up an unannounced imaginary surface target 4,000 yards off the starboard beam at 1600 on the 9th. General quarters was sounded and the situation was quickly explained to control personnel. Eight minutes after the alarm was sounded the secondary battery had fired 32 rounds at the target.

At 1100 on the 11th of June, NEW JERSEY arrived in her homeport for the first time. A flotilla of small craft followed her in from the outer breakwater to Pier Echo, where she moored adjacent to the Queen Mary. A large crowd was on hand to greet the ship, headed by the Mayor of Long Beach, Edwin W. Wade; Commander Cruiser-Destroyer Force Pacific, Rear Admiral Mason Freeman; and Commander Cruiser-Destroyer Group Long Beach, Rear Admiral Thomas J. Rudden, Jr.

Long Beach received NEW JERSEY warmly and extended a welcoming hand. In addition to the official greeting party,
2 INCHES TO SPARE IN PANAMA CANAL
ENTRANCE TO PACIFIC OCEAN
MAYOR WADE OF LONG BEACH
a bevy of hula girls performed on the pier. A local locker club provided free refreshments for NEW JERSEYMEN the first three days in port. The Armed Services Commission of the Long Beach Chamber of Commerce made tickets available for trips to Disneyland and to Dodgers' baseball games.

The first weekend in Long Beach was set aside for general visiting. On Saturday, the 15th of June, the gates were scheduled to be opened at 1200 in preparation for 1300 visiting. However, as happened in Norfolk, the crowds now started gathering early. The bridge connecting downtown Long Beach and Terminal Island opened that day allowing easy access to the Long Beach Naval Shipyards. By 1000 the crowd was so large the gates were opened two hours early. By 1800 19,411 visitors had been counted. The crew cleaned up the ship quickly and by 1900 things were back to normal. On Sunday, the 16th, the visitor count was 26,180 for a weekend total of over 45,000. The Long Beach Chief of Police estimated that another 200,000 people were unable to penetrate the traffic and never made it to the ship. He called it the worst traffic jam in the city's history.

After one week in her homeport, NEW JERSEY sailed to another Southern California port--San Diego. She left Long Beach in the morning of the 17th and arrived in San Diego that afternoon. The 17th marked the beginning of six weeks of intensive training to be observed by the San Diego Fleet Training Group. Forty observers embarked for the half-day trip to San Diego and immediately began inspections to determine readiness for training.

The rest of the week was spent in port for briefings and conferences with Fleet Training Group personnel and representatives from Cruiser-Destroyer Force Pacific. That weekend NEW JERSEY again flew VICTOR from her yardarm, indicative of another open house. On the 22nd and 23rd we hosted 46,000 guests, setting a new record for battleship visiting.

At 0900 on Monday, the 24th of June, the ship got underway for San Clemente Island and Shakedown Training had begun in earnest. That afternoon, with the ship at General Quarters, NEW JERSEYMEN coped with the initial battle problem, which was designed to simulate as closely as possible, a combat situation with the ship under attack. NEW JERSEY was "steaming off enemy territory in the South China Sea, and subject to attack from enemy aircraft, shore fire and torpedo boats". The problem lasted about two hours and included simulated rocket and bomb hits. The problem was designed to
test NEW JERSEY's ability to cope with battle damage. It also served to introduce many young crew members to something they had never before experienced--a combat situation. For, though many NEW JERSEYMEN were veterans of two wars, the majority of the men were young--the greatness of the past together with youth and the latest in technological developments.

The following day the ship again went to General Quarters, this time for anti-aircraft five-inch gunfire exercises, damage control drills and five and 16-inch shore bombardment on San Clemente Island under the watchful eyes of the Fleet Training Group observers and KNXT-TV.

The 26th saw more of the same. The ship went to General Quarters at 0615. At 1300 NEW JERSEY conducted her first underway replenishment since recommissioning, delivering and receiving a manila highline, and receiving a housefall rig from USS ALUDRA (AF 55), a stores ship which would later replenish NEW JERSEY off the coast of Vietnam. Later that afternoon NEW JERSEY conducted a man overboard drill, and in the evening her first night replenishment, again with the ALUDRA.

The rest of the week was spent underway in the Southern California operation areas. On Friday, the 28th, the ship returned to San Diego for the weekend. On Saturday morning 166 members of Admiral Freeman's staff and their families were hosted for a tour. The rest of the weekend was spent quietly, and on Monday morning the third week of Refresher Training began.

On Tuesday, the 2nd of July, NEW JERSEY flexed her long range muscles for the first time when she moved south west of San Clemente Island and fired salvos at 20 1/2 nautical miles. The impact area was under observation by a special observer group and was approximately 2,000 yards from the observers position. That same day NEW JERSEY moved out to the 20,000 yards plus range band and conducted shore bombardment on the San Clemente gunfire range impact area at Pyramid Cove. Naval personnel stationed on the island had set out discarded automobiles, painted bright yellow, for use as targets. Point detonating and mechanical time fuzed projectiles were both fired achieving both surface and air bursts which showered the target with shrapnel, some fragments weighing as much as 30 pounds. When the shoot was over, Commander Donald P. Roane, NEW JERSEY's Weapons Officer, remarked, "I think we've put the yellow cab company out of business."
Refresher Training continued into Wednesday morning, and shortly after noon NEW JERSEY departed station for Long Beach and a long holiday weekend. She moored at Pier Echo at 1900. Thursday, the 4th, being a National Holiday, meant dress ship. At morning colors 130 flags and pennants were flown from bow to stern. USS HORNET (CVS 12) was moored ahead of NEW JERSEY and together they formed a colorful display.

Monday, 8 July marked the beginning of another week of refresher training. By 1200 NEW JERSEY was on station off San Clemente for naval gunfire support communications exercises. In the afternoon the ship qualified for counter-battery fire. San Clemente range personnel arbitrarily lobbed smoked grenades into the firing area to simulate hostile fire positions. The Mark 38 (main battery) directors sighted the smoke, and tracked it optically, thereby directing 16-inch destructive fire.

The fourth week of refresher training included another media embarkation, this time with three representatives of NBC and two local newsmen from Pasadena aboard to gather material for feature stories. The eyes of the nation were still on the ship as she neared deployment to the Seventh Fleet and Southeast Asia. On the 11th of July, NEW JERSEY conducted her first refueling at sea, receiving 200,000 gallons of Navy standard fuel oil from USS PLATTE (AO 24). On Friday, the 12th, the ship received her mid-term battle problem, marking the halfway point in refresher training.

That weekend was spent in San Diego with conferences attended by NEW JERSEY weapons personnel and naval gunfire support air spotters. The Supply Department took advantage of this in-port period to load general stores and fresh provisions. On Saturday the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, Mr. Richard Fryklund, and his family visited the ship.

The fifth week of refresher training began with another media embark, this time consisting of Long Beach and San Diego newsmen. A team from the Combat Camera Group also rode the ship for the week. On Monday night the ship fired five-inch star shells to illuminate a sled towed by USS MUNSEE (ATF 107).

The following day at 1200, Rear Admiral Henry S. Monroe, Commander of the Amphibious Training Group Pacific, came aboard by helicopter to observe 16-inch fire. He was to retire from the Navy on 1 August and wanted to take advantage of this opportunity to see the big guns in action. Also
watching that day were the eyes of a television camera. The camera was set up to observe the impact of NEW JERSEY's 1,900 pound, high explosive projectiles. The action was recorded on video tape and replayed over the ship's newly installed closed circuit television system on 30 August, the day of NEW JERSEY's family cruise. On the 17th, six more media representatives embarked to cover shore bombardment. We put on a good show for them that afternoon. The exercise was a Z-30-G, secondary battery against a high speed surface target. The target was a 14-foot radio controlled drone boat called a "Firefish", capable of making 30 knots and high speed maneuvering. Sky Two (the port secondary battery director) had the target designated at 12,000 yards. The battery opened fire at 11,000 yards, and the drone was stopped at 8,200 yards. Fifty rounds of anti-aircraft common had been expended. NEW JERSEY closed the stricken drone and, as it passed down the port side, the bugler played taps.

The week was finished with more anti-aircraft shooting, anti-missile exercises, another underway replenishment with PLATTE, and shore bombardment. On Friday, 19 July, the secondary battery knocked two target sleeves out of the sky. The sleeves are 20 feet long and are towed on a 7,500 foot cable by a high speed aircraft. That evening NEW JERSEY passed Point Loma on the way into San Diego for the last time before deploying.

That Sunday invitational visiting was conducted for many San Diegans who had expressed an interest in touring the ship. Monday morning at 0800 NEW JERSEY got underway for the final week of refresher training. With the ship now fully qualified for shore bombardment, only the final battle problem remained before being declared ready for deployment to the Western Pacific. On Wednesday, the 24th of July, NEW JERSEY conducted her first rearming at sea since recommissioning. Commencing at 0800, the ship received 16-inch projectiles and powder and five-inch projectiles and powder from USS MOUNT KATMAI (AE 16) about 35 miles west of San Diego. The first underway personnel transfer was also conducted that day receiving a Fleet Training Group observer by highline from MOUNT KATMAI. On the 25th, the ship took part in a "David and Goliath" type operation. Refresher training requires that each ship tow and be towed. At 1130 that day NEW JERSEY was taken in tow by USS MUNSEE (ATF 107), a ship equalling less than one-fiftieth of NEW JERSEY's displacement. At 0815 on the 26th, NEW JERSEY began the final battle problem. The problem was completed by 1200 and refresher training was officially over.
In the critique following the problem, Lieutenant Commander George Head of the Fleet Training Group, attested to NEW JERSEY's battle readiness. The ship will "have no problem in carrying out her primary mission of shore bombardment", he said.

The battleship, which had been taken out of mothballs in Philadelphia less than one year ago, had now been declared fit for combat. The first step in this process had been to reactivate the machinery and equipment. This had been done in Philadelphia by the nucleus crew and 2,000 civilian yard personnel. NEW JERSEY had proven herself in machinery trials and Inspection and Survey. There had been no question that the ship was ready. Refresher training had proved something more important: that the men of NEW JERSEY were ready to take the ship into combat. No ship, no matter how fine technically and mechanically, is any better than her men make her. Without them she would be 58,000 tons of steel, wiring and machinery. With them, the men of NEW JERSEY, she was a fighting unit, a U. S. Navy ship which would soon sail to the troubled waters of Vietnam and write pages in American history. "Firepower for Freedom" would soon be on its way to defend "the rights and liberties of small nations".

(C) The weekend of 27 and 28 July was spent in Long Beach in preparation for a week of advanced training with USS TOWERS (DDG 9), NEW JERSEY's escort for the transit to the Western Pacific and the first on-line period. Monday morning at 0900 the ship got underway and rendezvoused with TOWERS. That day was spent conducting shore bombardment at San Clemente with condition II and condition III watches set. Shore bombardment continued throughout all of that night and into the following morning. On the 30th, NEW JERSEY refueled TOWERS, the first time that evolution had been accomplished. That afternoon NEW JERSEY fired a newly developed five-inch projectile with an infra-red fuze at flares dropped by a Navy S2F. In a message to the Navy's Ordnance System Command, Captain Snyder called the projectiles "utterly fantastic".

(C) On the 31st both active and passive electronic countermeasures exercises were conducted in the morning. Anti-cruise missile training, with a F-4 simulating an enemy missile, was also conducted. During 12 attacks NEW JERSEY's countermeasures gear was able to break lock several times. That afternoon NEW JERSEY knocked out another "Firefish" surface drone, this time firing five-inch variable time fragmentation and stopping the craft at 9,200 yards. Thursday and Friday were devoted to more 16-inch shore bombardment on San Clemente using the Snoopy DASH system for spotting. In
this mode a small unmanned helo, equipped with a television camera, hovers over the target area under control of the ship's combat information center. A television image of the area is relayed back to the ship and monitored in the plotting room. Plotting room personnel can easily observe the impact and adjust fire as necessary.

Friday, 2 August, NEW JERSEY returned to Long Beach for a month of post shakedown availability at the Naval Shipyard before deployment. In this period minor yard work could be done and rough edges taken off any equipment problems which had come up during refresher training. It would also be an opportunity for NEW JERSEYmen to be with their families before a seven-and-one-half month deployment to the Western Pacific.

During this period the ship's closed circuit television system was placed into full operation. The system was made possible through the generosity of the New Jersey State Society for the Battleship NEW JERSEY and included two General Electric Vidicon cameras, a C.E. half-inch video tape recorder and playback unit, a Dyna Mod system modulator, a Graflex 16mm motion picture projector, four Sony monitors and associated microphones and lighting equipment. The ship also installed 23 large screen sets in living areas throughout the ship for maximum exposure. The system contributed greatly to the crew's morale and well being. About five hours of programming were scheduled per day which included entertainment, training lectures and films, interview programs, news and sports.

(C) The availability period was also spent enhancing NEW JERSEY's missile defense posture. A good deal of concern had been expressed over the possibility of the North Vietnamese having Russian built surface to surface missiles similar to those used by the Egyptians to since the Israeli destroyer ELATH in the summer of 1967. The Navy's Research and Development Team provided NEW JERSEY with the latest in anti-missile defense.

On the 6th of August, Dr. Paul Stuart, the San Diego State College PACE Coordinator, arrived to make arrangements with NEW JERSEY's Training and Education Officer for PACE (Program for Accredited College Education) to be instituted on board. This program enables Navy men to receive a college education while at sea. Five PACE instructors later rode the ship to Pearl Harbor to get the classes started. After this brief beginning, various ship's personnel took over as instructors and the program continued throughout the deployment.
On the 14th of August the final test to be passed before the deployment occurred. At 0820, Administrative Inspectors from Cruiser-Destroyer Flotilla THREE, under the command of Rear Admiral Thomas J. Rudden, Jr., arrived for the Administrative Inspection. NEW JERSEY was also honored that morning by the visit of Admiral John J. Hyland, Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet. The Administrative Inspection lasted all day and the final grades were announced the following morning: bedding and bunking, 92%; cleanliness, 89.3% (turrets, mounts and magazines were noted as outstanding in cleanliness by Captain Jack Hilton, Cruiser-Destroyer Flotilla THREE Chief of Staff); Operations, 97.7%; Navigation, 89%; Executive, 93.1%; Weapons, 93%; and Engineering, 95%.

The personnel inspection, conducted by Rear Admiral Rudden and in full dress whites, was held at 0900, 15 August. NEW JERSEYMEN received an overall grade of "Excellent" in the personnel inspection, with Seaman William E. Cleary of Third Division, Electrician's Mate second class Robert E. Brown of E Division, and FM Division as a whole, being noted by the Admiral for outstanding appearance. The final evaluation after two days of thorough inspection was "NEW JERSEY ready in all respects for distant duty and extended operations".

The rest of the month was spent making final preparations for deployment. On the 20th the ship received a letter of complaint from a resident of Huntington Beach, California who claimed that the concussion from NEW JERSEY's guns had shattered a picture window in his home. NEW JERSEY had indeed been firing at the time his window was broken--at San Clemente Island, over 50 miles away. This was the ship's first confirmed gun damage assessment. On the 22nd, Long Beach again extended its hospitality to the men of NEW JERSEY. Mr. Dick Wilson, a local attorney who had been a Secretary of the Navy guest on the trip up from Panama, invited NEW JERSEY golfers to spend a day at the Virginia Country Club.

On the 28th NEW JERSEY got underway from Pier Echo for the ammunition anchorage at Seal Beach. Two days were required for a complete loadout of five and 16-inch ammunition and powder. At 1900 on the 29th, the ship returned to Pier Echo to prepare for the final day at sea before leaving for operations with the Seventh Fleet, a family cruise, which would begin at 0930 on the 30th.

The 30th was a day for NEW JERSEYMEN and their families. Invitations were printed on board and distributed to the crew at quarters several days in advance. The Naval Station
Nursery at Long Beach made special arrangements to care for children too young to go to sea. NEW JERSEY commissarymen prepared and served a barbecue with all the trimmings to 3173 hungry crew members and quests on the fantail using barbecue grills fabricated by R Division from oil drums. A special pamphlet was prepared for the day and distributed to everyone.

A Navy ship may wait for no man, but that day NEW JERSEY waited about 10 minutes for a few of her lady guests. After getting underway from Long Beach, the ship set a straight course for Avalon Bay on Santa Catalina Island where she would lie to during the noon meal. It was quite a sight, a battleship being coned by a young and determined officer, his wife whispering instructions in his ear. And the engineering spaces were brightened up considerably by the appearance of a few miniskirts.

After the barbecue the video tape of shore bombardment on San Clemente was broadcast several times over the ship's TV system. The 30th was an enjoyable day for all. Proud NEW JERSEYMEN showed their admiring parents, wives and sweethearts how their jobs contributed to making the ship an efficient and smooth running unit. Their families were able to better understand the ship and its operation.

The ship moored at 1500 in Long Beach to commence final preparations for the departure on 5 September, the date which had been set down by the Department of Defense over a year earlier. On Labor Day, 2 September, NEW JERSEY again hosted invitational visiting for 1,500 Long Beach residents. Since recommissioning five months earlier, the world's only active battleship had hosted a total of approximately a quarter of a million visitors. NEW JERSEY had certainly made a lot of friends in a short time.

The trip from Long Beach to Vietnam would cover nearly 9,000 miles and last 24 days with scheduled stops in Hawaii and the Philippines. Nine guests of the Secretary of the Navy would ride the ship on the first leg, Long Beach to Pearl Harbor. They boarded on the afternoon of the 4th, the day before getting underway for combat operations.

It was with mixed emotions that NEW JERSEYMEN faced this voyage which would begin at 1000 the following morning. No man, no matter how seasoned a veteran he might be, likes to leave his family for periods of seven or eight months at a time. Yet this was the day NEW JERSEYMEN had been preparing themselves for since "Decision Day" 13 months ago. Everything they had done for the past year was pointed at putting
16-inch "Firepower for Freedom" on the gunline in Vietnam. A minority of critics had said the ship was vulnerable. Others said she wasn't worth the cost of reactivation. The men of NEW JERSEY had been waiting for a year for the chance to prove them wrong, which they would do irrefutably in the months to come. Rear Admiral Freeman, Commander Cruiser-Destroyer Force Pacific, summed up the aura surrounding the deployment in a message to NEW JERSEY that day: "few deployments will be as closely watched by the nation as well as the military commanders as yours. The challenges and responsibilities of deploying our only battleship off the coast of Vietnam are immense. Your past record indicates you are ready to carry out all assigned tasks".

Leaving families and friends on Pier Echo, NEW JERSEYMEN quickly turned their thoughts to the future, and the task which lay before them. The four day transit to Pearl was devoted to routine upkeep and training. The Secretary of the Navy guests (all of whom were members of the U. S. news media) were given thorough briefings on all phases of the ship's operations. They visited informally with the crew and made many lasting friends.

The last night before arrival in Pearl NEW JERSEY held "Meet the Press", in reverse. Radioman First Class George Stavros interviewed the Secretary of the Navy's guests on the closed circuit TV system. At the close of the press program, Mr. Webster, Vice President of CBS, directed a few editorial comments to the men of NEW JERSEY. "I'd like you to know that we share your pride in the NEW JERSEY--and you've clearly shown us that since last Thursday. With every briefing--every tour around the ship--we've gained a new understanding of the problems you faced and the way you've surmounted them. It seems almost incredible that so much has been accomplished in just 12 months from Decision Day.

"We know you're not satisfied with things as they are--but that dissatisfaction is the reason they're as good as they are. And, the reason they'll continue to improve.

"Some of us have served in the Navy in years past--some in other branches of the service. And, when we see what you are doing--catch your enthusiasm as you explain it to us (as so many of you have done so well)--feel the spirit of practical patriotism that seems to pervade the crew, the officers and your captain, frankly we can't help but be proud in a very special way.

"You'll probably be making a lot of news with the NEW JERSEY in the months ahead--saving a good many lives and
giving millions of citizens a new appreciation of what the Navy can mean to this country. I think you'll make 'Firepower for Freedom' a familiar phrase, with a satisfying ring.

"And, somehow, I hope you don't lose your other motto I've heard in the messhall. There's a good feeling to 'READY OR NOT...HERE WE ARE!'"

Hawaii extended an all out "Aloha" welcome to NEW JERSEY when she arrived on the afternoon of the 9th, after rendering honors to the USS ARIZONA Memorial. Dancing hula girls greeted the ship on the pier and came aboard to place leis around the necks of everyone in sight. On the 10th, briefings were conducted at the Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet to familiarize the officers and men with "Sea Dragon" and Naval gunfire support operations. At 0930, the Commander in Chief, Pacific, Admiral John S. McCain, came aboard with his component commanders to brief the wardroom. The dignitaries were General Joseph Nazzaro, Commander in Chief, Pacific Air Forces; General Ralph E. Haines, Jr., Commander in Chief, U. S. Army Pacific; Vice Admiral Walter H. Baumberger, Deputy Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet; and Lieutenant General Henry W. Buse, Jr., Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific. Following the briefing, Admiral McCain presented the Silver Star Medal to Gunner's Mate third class Wilfred F. Heinien for conspicuous gallantry and service beyond the call of duty in connection with Heinien's heroism while serving aboard a Navy river patrol craft in Vietnam in March 1968.

That afternoon, NEW JERSEY again broke VICTOR signifying open house for the citizens of Hawaii. Over 10,000 people took advantage of the opportunity to visit a battleship. The following morning at 0800, NEW JERSEY headed west for Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines, the last stop before Vietnam. After leaving Pearl, NEW JERSEY conducted underway training firing the main battery and other last minute training evolutions until 1500 that afternoon.

On the 13th, NEW JERSEY crossed the International Date-line at 22 degrees 01.0 minutes north latitude. Twenty and one-half minutes of Saturday, the 14th, were observed before the new day changed to the 15th. The 16th and 17th were devoted to calibration shoots with TOWERS observing our fall of shot. Also on the 16th, NEW JERSEY topped off TOWERS with 91,967 gallons of Navy standard fuel oil in two hours. On the morning of the 17th, Typhoons Carmen and Della caused the ship to divert from her great circle track between Pearl and Subic. Base course was changed from 260 to 225, bringing the ship south of Guam.