

The Story of NEW ORLEANS

USS NEW ORLEANS (LPH 11) first took shape March 1, 1966, when her keel was laid at Philadelphia Naval Shipyard, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She was commissioned on November 16, 1968, under the command of Captain G. M. Even, USN. After completion of final outfitting and weapons on load, she proceeded through the Panama Canal to arrive at her homeport of San Diego on March 3, 1969. Less than five months later, she departed for Vietnam on the first of 18 Western Pacific deployments.

Receiving her baptism of fire in the Vietnam War, NEW ORLEANS was a highly effective and versatile platform during that conflict. Her first deployment was eight months long, and included numerous operations off the coast of Danang, Vietnam. In October 1969, NEW ORLEANS off loaded Battalion Landing Team 2-26 in Vietnam, and was in sight of Danang on New Year's Eve. She helped move troops out of Vietnam during OPERATION KEYSTONE CARDINAL. In March 1970 she returned 1,100 Marines and 100 vehicles to San Diego during operation KEYSTONE BLUE JAY. August 1972 found NEW ORLEANS performing mine sweeping operations in support of OPERATION END SWEEP.

Serving as a control ship, she cleared the mined coastal and harbor waters off North Vietnam.

NEW ORLEANS answered the call to duty again in 1990, when she steamed into harm's way during OPERATIONS DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM. When USS TRIPOLI (LPH 10) struck a mine on February 18, 1991, leaving a 20 by 30 foot hole in her hull, NEW ORLEANS took over as the flagship for mine sweeping operations in the Persian Gulf. She played a major role in the largest amphibious task force deployed in 25 years, as she was the only ship in the Gulf to actually send Marines into combat.

NEW ORLEANS also distinguished herself in crises other than wars. She spent several months in the Indian Ocean during the Iranian Hostage Crisis. She served in an alert status off the coast of the Philippines during their 1986 national elections. She participated in contingency operations near Selat Lombok. Whenever and wherever NEW ORLEANS was needed, she was on station, maintaining a careful watch on U. S. interests.

During the years of relative peace, NEW ORLEANS maintained her battle readiness by constant training, rigorous preparation, and participation in countless exercises. In 1970 she participated in MEBLEX 1-70, one of the largest amphibious exercises ever conducted on the West Coast. Since then, she has participated in many major exercises, including TEAM SPIRIT, VALIANT BLITZ, COBRA GOLD, KERNEL USHER, RIMPAC, VALIANT USHER, KERNEL BLITZ, and TANDEM THRUST. NEW ORLEANS' constant vigilance in maintaining her battle readiness led to many awards and accolades, as well as outstanding performance on every imaginable inspection. After sweeping every "Efficiency" award one year, she even became known as the "Hallmark Ship."

Lending a helping hand to those in need has also

The First Battle of New Orleans

The Battle of New Orleans, in the War of 1812, represented a significant victory for the fledgling United States. Commodore Daniel Patterson, Commander of the Naval Station of New Orleans, successfully delayed a large British amphibious expedition using a small fleet of gunboats and two sloops. This delaying action enabled the forces of General Andrew Jackson to select a desirable downriver defense and await the arrival of much needed reinforcements. Because it was impossible to communicate quickly across the Atlantic, the British attack on New Orleans was actually conducted 15 days after the war had officially ended. In January of 1815, Jackson won a decisive victory over the British forces at New Orleans. The British suffered over 2,000 casualties, while the Americans had fewer than 100. The accidental linking of the news of the peace treaty with Jackson's victory at New Orleans convinced many Americans that the war had ended in triumph. This victory preserved U. S. national honor, self respect, and prestige at home and abroad.

been a recurring theme for NEW ORLEANS, as evidenced by her many humanitarian accomplishments. In 1971, she provided extensive assistance to the residents of Palnuan City on Mindoro Island, Republic of the Philippines. Marines from the embarked Battalion Landing Team built water storage tanks while medical personnel treated over 800 villagers for conditions ranging from intestinal parasites to tuberculosis. Dental care was also provided. One of the ship's portable generators was used to show 2,000 villagers their first movie. A year later, NEW ORLEANS returned to the Philippines to provide flood relief. In 1989, while in transit to Mazatlan, Mexico, she was diverted to Cabo San Lucas to render assistance after a propane explosion destroyed a large section of the city. Most notably, NEW ORLEANS deployed in September 1993 in support of OPERATIONS RESTORE HOPE and UNOSOM II off the coast of Mogadishu, Somalia.

NEW ORLEANS amassed an impressive record of search and rescue achievements, starting with her very first Navy helicopter landing underway. A UH-2 flew from Naval Air Station, Lakehurst, New Jersey to evacuate a seriously ill shipyard worker to a hospital ashore during machinery trials a few days after her commissioning. NEW ORLEANS entered the record books for the longest MEDEVAC (775 nautical miles) when a crew member injured his head in an accident and two Air Force H-53s flew 7 hours and 43 minutes from Hawaii to reach the ship and take him to a hospital.

The ship operated her own organic search and rescue helicopter (call sign "CAJUN") until August 1992. First an H-46 Sea Knight, it was later replaced by an H-1 Huey. NEW ORLEANS performed many MEDEVACs and rescues utilizing both "CAJUN" and embarked Navy and Marine Corps helicopters. Beneficiaries of these services included personnel from NEW ORLEANS, other United States Ships, Norwegian merchants, Australian Navy ships, and civilian fishing and sailing vessels. In addition, NEW

ORLEANS' helicopters have rescued pilots from F-4, H-53, and AV-8 aircraft, as well as space vehicles.

NEW ORLEANS began her space career on February 9, 1971, when she recovered the Apollo 14 command module and astronauts Alan Shepard, Stuart Roosa, and Ed Mitchell 900 miles south of American Samoa in the South Pacific. On September 25, 1973, she recovered the Skylab III command module and astronauts Alan Bean, Owen Garriott, and Jack Lousma 190 miles southwest of San Diego. On February 8, 1974, NEW ORLEANS recovered the Skylab IV command module and astronauts Jerry Carr, Ed Gibson, and Bill Pogue 250 miles southwest of San Diego. Finally, on July 5, 1975, she recovered the Apollo/Soyuz Test Project command module and astronauts Thomas Stafford, Donald Slayton, and Vance Brand.

Aviation testing was another arena in which NEW ORLEANS excelled. Her accomplishments included the first landing of an AV-8A HARRIER on an LPH class ship in the Pacific, followed by the first underway operations of the "Jump Jet." The first UAV operations from an LPH were conducted onboard NEW ORLEANS. She performed dynamic interface testing for several rotary wing platforms, and operated many experimental aircraft complements utilizing Navy, Marine, Army, Air Force, and Special Operations assets. Additionally, a number of foreign and civilian aircraft have landed on her flight deck.

A world-class hostess, NEW ORLEANS

The Second Battle of New Orleans

The City of New Orleans played a major role in American Civil War history. Admiral David Farragut's fleet passed the forts guarding New Orleans on April 24, 1862, sealing the fate of the Confederacy. New Orleans fell to the Union fleet two days later, assuring that the United States would not be divided. The delta of the Mississippi was open to the Union assault force, which joined the Union forces coming south in the great pincer which severed the Confederacy. "Thus," reported Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy, "the great southern depot of the trade of the immense central emporium of the wealthy region was restored to national authority; the mouth of the Mississippi was under our control and an outlet for the great west to the ocean was secured."

represented the nation with dignity and grace around the globe. In 1969, she hosted the Eighth Vietnamese Awards Ceremony. Guests included the Prime Minister of the Republic of Vietnam, Commander in Chief U. S. Pacific Fleet, and numerous other dignitaries. Over the years, she has received several foreign heads of state, the Bolshoi Ballet, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, several Chiefs of Naval Operations, and Miss America, to name a few.

NEW ORLEANS also enjoyed her share of the limelight. In 1971 the popular Mike Douglas TV Show was filmed onboard. In addition to the media coverage of all the space program recoveries, several portions of the Oscar winning movie "Apollo 13," starring Tom Hanks, Kevin Bacon, and Bill Paxton, were shot onboard. NEW ORLEANS' Hollywood career ended in May of 1997, after the crew

participated in the filming of the TV movie tentatively titled "A Thousand Men and a Baby." The movie is based on a true story about a U. S. Navy ship that recovered and cared for an infant during the Korean War. The movie is scheduled to air on CBS affiliates at 9 PM (PST), December 7, 1997.

Throughout her 29 year history, NEW ORLEANS has always lived up to the "Hallmark" standard. As a fighting ship, she has never let her country down, always ready to go in harm's way to defend our national interests. NEW ORLEANS has excelled in every endeavor; her many accomplishments are a tribute to the fine Navy and Marine Corps Team that has served with her so well. Her legacy of excellence will be the standard by which other amphibious assault ships will be judged in the years to come. She will be sorely missed.

Fair winds and following seas, NEW ORLEANS!

NEW ORLEANS' ANCESTORS

The first ship intended to bear the name NEW ORLEANS, a wooden ship of 2,805 tons and 74 guns, was never commissioned. She was under construction during the War of 1812, and work was suspended when the war ended. She was sold in 1883, having been in an unfinished condition for 68 years.

The first ship commissioned as USS NEW ORLEANS was a light cruiser of 3,430 tons built in England for the Government of Brazil. The AMOZONES, as she was named by the Brazilians, was purchased by the United States on March 16, 1898. Commissioned by the U. S. Navy on March 18, 1898, she served with distinction in both the Spanish-American War and World War I. She remained in commission until 1920.

The second USS NEW ORLEANS (CA 32) was one of six ASTORIA class heavy cruisers completed just prior to World War II. Built at the Brooklyn Naval Shipyard, the 10,000 ton cruiser was commissioned on February 15, 1934. NEW ORLEANS operated with the Atlantic Fleet until 1936, when she was assigned to the Pacific Fleet. Surviving the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, NEW ORLEANS went on to participate in a total of 17 Pacific Campaign engagements during World War II. She was decommissioned in 1946.

