



# **USS NEW ORLEANS (LPH 11)**

Decommissioning

San Diego, California

31 October 1997



## *The Ship's Emblem*



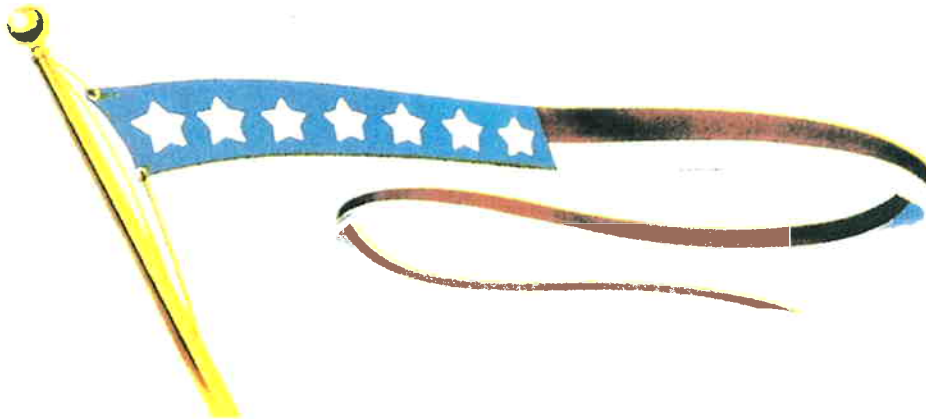
The Ship's Emblem was designed by Mr. McNeil of the Paint Shop and Mr. Kuncovich of the Design Division, Philadelphia Naval Shipyard. Mr. Kuncovich, after some research work, suggested the "coat of arms" from the city of Orleans, France. The symbolic eagle of the United States, with wings extended overhead, signified the employment of helicopters. Mr. McNeil combined Mr. Kuncovich's idea with the globe background to signify the world-wide nature of Amphibious Forces, and combined service with the United States Marines.

This emblem is appropriate because NEW ORLEANS has the capability to embark, transport and deliver in excess of 2,000 Marines to any shore on the planet, enforcing the doctrines and policies of the United States Government through airborne amphibious assault.

We are grateful to both of these gentlemen for their outstanding and talented work in providing USS NEW ORLEANS with this insignia. It has been displayed with pride throughout the world.

# *The Decommissioning Ceremony*

A N O B S E R V A N C E O F N A V A L T R A D I T I O N



The decommissioning ceremony is a solemn occasion, one on which we gather together to say farewell to a legacy of steel, sweat, and blood. This ceremony signifies the end of an era in which thousands of men have sacrificed their time, energy, and upon occasion their lives, in order to ensure that the ship's mission was accomplished.

Nowhere in Navy Regulations will you find rules that state a ship must have any sort of decommissioning ceremony. This custom has risen out of the human need to reflect upon the loss of something that is a major part of one's life. It is only precedence that dictates that this should be a formal, impressive, and solemn event. The decommissioning ceremony for UNITED STATES SHIP NEW ORLEANS marks the end of twenty nine years of service for a ship that received her baptism of fire in Vietnam and is being laid to rest in the city she has called home for all these years.

The symbol above has its origin in European antiquity. During the Middle Ages, the mark of knights and other nobles was the "coachwhip" pennant. This pennant was known as a pennon. The size and elaborateness of the design generally indicated the relative rank and importance of the noble it heralded. On the rare occasions that these nobles embarked upon seagoing vessels, they ensured that their pennons were flown from the ship. The pennons generally flew from the vessel's most visible point, usually the forecandle or main mast.

It is believed that the first time the pennon was used independent of feudal heraldry dates back to the 17th century during a conflict between the Dutch and English Navies. In one particular engagement, Maarten Harpertzoon Tromp, the Dutch Admiral, hoisted a broom at his masthead to indicate his intention to sweep the English from the sea. The English Admiral then hoisted a horsewhip, indicating his intention to chastise the insolent Dutch. Ever since that time, the narrow coachwhip pennant, symbolizing the original horsewhip, has been the distinctive mark of a man-of-war. This tradition of so designating ships of war has been adopted by all nations.

The modern United States Navy commissioning pennant is blue at the hoist with a horizontal red and white stripe at the fly, and varies in length with the size of the ship. At one time, there were thirteen white stars in the blue field representing the original states, but in 1933 seven white stars became the standard. The commissioning pennant is flown at the main on vessels with no flag officers embarked. Ships with a high ranking officer embarked will fly a personal or command pennant instead.

During the ceremony, NEW ORLEANS will "strike colors" for a final time. The commissioning pennant will be lowered and presented to the ship's final Commanding Officer. This ceremony will mark the official retirement of NEW ORLEANS. Above all this ceremony is to say goodbye to an old and faithful servant. Fair winds and following seas, old girl.



*The Honorable John H. Dalton*  
Secretary of the Navy



*General John M. Shalikashvili*  
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff



THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350-1000  
17 September 1997

Captain Richard C. Perkins, USN  
Commanding Officer  
USS NEW ORLEANS (LPH 11)  
PFO AP 96627-1650

Dear Captain Perkins:

As USS NEW ORLEANS hauls down her colors after twenty-nine years of patriotic service, I would like to express my appreciation to all her officers and crew, as well as to all of those who have served aboard her during her long and distinguished career.

Through nearly three decades, NEW ORLEANS has returned our Nation's investment well beyond all expectations. The ability to project power from the sea has always been one of our Navy's strengths. In the years since World War II our Navy-Marine Corps amphibious team has proven itself a potent weapon in conflict and a significant force for preserving our peace and freedom. From Vietnam to the Persian Gulf and Somalia, you and your ship have demonstrated your versatility and skill. Thanks to the professionalism of her crew, NEW ORLEANS has carried out her demanding mission with honor and has shown herself an essential part of our first-line strength.

Now that NEW ORLEANS' tour of duty is over, those who served with her can take pride in her many contributions to America's defense and in the proud tradition of duty well done that she has created. In each of you, NEW ORLEANS' spirit will sail on.

Sincerely,

*John H. Dalton*  
John H. Dalton



CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20318-9999

September 1997

TO THE OFFICERS AND CREW  
OF  
USS NEW ORLEANS

On the occasion of her decommissioning, it is a privilege to honor a proud ship and the sailors who served her during three decades of honored service to our Nation.

For almost 30 years, NEW ORLEANS has been at the forefront of freedom, demonstrating our national resolve in peace and war. From Vietnam to the Persian Gulf, she served with honor and distinction. Her record of service on all the oceans of the world is a stirring chapter in the history of our great Navy. The exemplary teamwork and dedication of her crew were worthy of a great ship and are in keeping with the highest standards of military service.

On behalf of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the men and women of the United States Armed Forces, congratulations on a sterling record of achievement over many years. We share your pride, and welcome this proud vessel to an honored rest - until the Nation calls once again on NEW ORLEANS.

May you always have fair winds and following seas!

Sincerely,

*John M. Shalikashvili*  
JOHN M. SHALIKASHVILI  
Chairman  
of the Joint Chiefs of Staff