



USS NEW ORLEANS (LPH 11)

Decommissioning

San Diego, California

31 October 1997



The Ship's Emblem



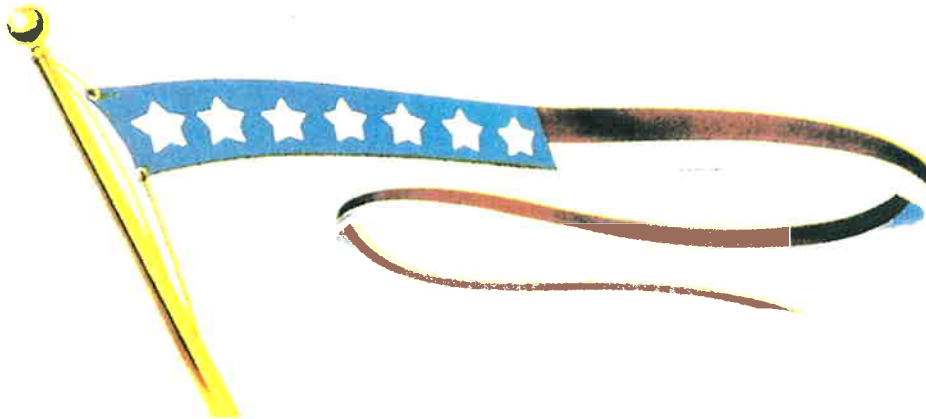
The Ship's Emblem was designed by Mr. McNeil of the Paint Shop and Mr. Kuncovich of the Design Division, Philadelphia Naval Shipyard. Mr. Kuncovich, after some research work, suggested the "coat of arms" from the city of Orleans, France. The symbolic eagle of the United States, with wings extended overhead, 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 forecastle 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



Admiral Jay L. Johnson
Chief of Naval Operations



General C. C. Krulak
Commandant of the Marine Corps




CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS

A MESSAGE FOR THE SAILORS OF
USS NEW ORLEANS (LPH 11)

As you prepare to decommission USS NEW ORLEANS, I congratulate current and former crew members on your historic contributions to our nation's security. While it's always difficult to bid farewell to old friends, each of you should take great pride in NEW ORLEANS' accomplishments throughout an extremely distinguished career.

For three decades, NEW ORLEANS' crews have served our country with distinction. Always ready to defend our nation's interests, NEW ORLEANS played an instrumental role during the Vietnam Conflict, Persian Gulf War and Somalia contingency operation. She exemplified forward presence during a turbulent era in our history and served as a powerful deterrent to any state that might have considered testing our nation's resolve. Her numerous awards for superior performance are testimony to operational excellence demonstrated around the globe.

Today's ceremony does not end the legacy of USS NEW ORLEANS. Your ship will live on in the memories of all those who served aboard her and in the hearts of freedom-loving people around the world.


JAY L. JOHNSON
Admiral, U.S. Navy




31 October 1997

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

For over a quarter of a century the USS NEW ORLEANS (LPH 11) has been an instrument of our nation's resolve. She has been a weapon in our arsenal and a symbol of our strength. She has been both an instrument of war and the conveyance for the outstretched hand of our compassionate and generous citizenry. For 29 years, USS NEW ORLEANS has faithfully done the nation's bidding.

The strength of this ship, however, was not in her ability to weather the pounding sea or to withstand enemy fire. The strength of the USS NEW ORLEANS has been her crew and the Marines embarked aboard. In their determination to persevere in the face of great challenges, in their courage to go in harm's way, and in their selfless service, is written the legacy of USS NEW ORLEANS. Their pursuit of excellence in the execution of their mission... whether on watch around the world, or landing the landing force, is the true testimony of NEW ORLEANS' worth to the nation.

As we strike NEW ORLEANS from the active register of ships, it is fitting that we remember all those who served aboard this great ship. From Viet Nam, to operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM, the sailors and Marines who have crossed her decks served with honor and purpose. As the ensign and commissioning pennant are hauled down, and the last deck log entry is made, the legacy of NEW ORLEANS will live on through the memory of their dedicated and gallant service.

Semper Paratus

C. C. KRULAK
General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps



Admiral J. W. Prueher
USCINCPAC



Admiral A. Clemens
CINCPACFLT



18 August 1997

Dear Captain Perkins,

My personal thanks and congratulations to the officers and crew of USS NEW ORLEANS (LPH 11), both past and present, for their significant contributions to our nation's security.

For almost three decades, NEW ORLEANS has been on our front line of defense protecting U.S. national interests. During 29 years of service, NEW ORLEANS amassed an enviable record of accomplishments. In the Vietnam and Persian Gulf Wars she boldly sailed into harm's way to ensure that her charge of Marines could take every objective. In the Somali Crisis, she provided crucial humanitarian assistance to a starving, violence ravaged country. NEW ORLEANS recovered astronauts and spacecraft; rescued refugees from countries throughout Asia and Africa; performed experimental helicopter, Harrier and UAV trials; conducted Presidential support operations; and won almost every award possible. NEW ORLEANS has done it all.

I have the utmost appreciation and respect for the capabilities which NEW ORLEANS brought to every conflict and crisis. Her distinguished list of achievements is a direct reflection on the fine Sailors and Marines who served aboard her. Although NEW ORLEANS' career is ending, those dedicated professionals will carry her legacy of excellence for years to come.

Well done, NEW ORLEANS.

Decommissioning is hard emotional work. Like all other tasks, New Orleans has excelled, and sprinted through the finish line - BZ! JWP
Captain R. C. Perkins, USN
Commanding Officer
USS NEW ORLEANS (LPH 11)
FPO AP 96627-1650

My best,

Joe Prueher
J. W. PRUEHER
Admiral, U.S. Navy



31 October 1997

Dear Captain Perkins,

On behalf of your shipmates in the Pacific Fleet, I extend my congratulations and best wishes to you and the crew of USS NEW ORLEANS (LPH 11) as you decommission this magnificent ship after 29 years of service to our Navy and nation.

Since commissioning in 1968, USS NEW ORLEANS has played a starring role in much of America's history in the Pacific and Indian Oceans for the past three decades. With 18 deployments to the Western Pacific, USS NEW ORLEANS has protected America's vital national interests in the region from her first deployment to Vietnam in 1969 to her most recent actions in the 1991 Gulf War and the Somali Crisis. USS NEW ORLEANS has played an integral role in creating the climate of peace and stability which has set the stage for the 21st century, the century of the Pacific.

In addition, USS NEW ORLEANS' historic roles have been punctuated with important contributions and firsts in amphibious warfare, including launching the first AV-8 Harrier aircraft and UAV craft from an LPH. Along with her wartime service and support during humanitarian crises, USS NEW ORLEANS has had a "Wonderful Life" as a star in our Navy and in Hollywood roles in such films as "Apollo 13" and "A Thousand Men and a Baby." Always there when needed, she has made a special mark in history and will leave the service of her country with an exceptional record of outstanding performance.

The Pacific Fleet commends each and every Sailor and Marine who gave USS NEW ORLEANS such a distinguished and honorable heritage. On behalf of your shipmates, Well done!

Sincerely,

Archie Clemens
ARCHIE CLEMENS
Admiral, U.S. Navy



Vice Admiral Brent M. Bennett
COMNAVAIRPAC



Vice Admiral A. J. Kreckich
COMNAVSURFPAC



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
COMMANDER NAVAL AIR FORCE
UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
BOX 237051
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92123-7051

October 31, 1997

Captain R.C. Perkins, U.S. Navy
Commanding Officer
USS NEW ORLEANS (LPH 11)
FPO AP 96627-1650

Dear Captain Perkins,

The decommissioning of USS NEW ORLEANS (LPH 11) sadly marks the end of a fine ship's career. During her 29 years of commissioned service, NEW ORLEANS has seen tremendous changes in world order and has proudly stood the watch.

USS NEW ORLEANS represents a proud segment of our naval heritage and traditions. She has served with distinction and made great contributions to our nation's defense during both the Vietnam and Persian Gulf conflicts. She has provided humanitarian assistance to many thousands of people in Somalia and other regions. She has carried out our foreign policy for almost three decades, always ready to sail where America needed her.

Since arriving in her homeport of San Diego in 1969, NEW ORLEANS has also made significant contributions to Naval Aviation. While some may have overlooked the big deck amphib's role, NEW ORLEANS' achievements have kept her firmly in the spotlight. From her flight deck the first AV-8 Harrier operations in the Pacific were conducted. A winner of the Admiral Flatley Aviation Safety Award, she was the first LPH to launch and recover Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs).

Beyond her vital role on the Navy-Marine Corps Team as a key participant in littoral operations, NEW ORLEANS also has the distinction of participating in America's space program. She recovered astronauts from the Apollo 14, Skylab II, Skylab IV and Apollo/Soyuz Test Project Missions. NEW ORLEANS also participated in the longest over water air-sea rescue, as well as numerous rescues and medical evacuations of both civilians and military personnel. Her list of credits even includes a 'starring role' in the recent film Apollo 13.

Although her active duty life comes to a close, NEW ORLEANS' many contributions will be remembered by those whose lives she has touched. Her crew and officers, past and present, will always share in the distinction of having served as one of "The Enforcers" aboard the mighty ship USS NEW ORLEANS.

Most sincerely and with great respect for a superb ship,

Brent M. Bennett
BRENT M. BENNITT
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
COMMANDER NAVAL SURFACE FORCE
UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
2544 RENDOVIA ROAD
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92155-5490

12 August 1997

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

Dear Captain Perkins,

Congratulations to you and your crew who have served proudly on USS NEW ORLEANS (LPH 11). The decommissioning of NEW ORLEANS will mark the end of a truly historic period in our Nation's naval history.

Commissioned nearly 29 years ago at the height of the Cold War, NEW ORLEANS' long career is a symbol of our Nation's commitment to maritime security and freedom. NEW ORLEANS served with pride in numerous campaigns from Vietnam to the Gulf War. Her outstanding record of humanitarian service has been equally significant. She has been a critical asset in maintaining our "Forward From the Sea" mission and has responded superbly in every contingency. Since her commissioning, NEW ORLEANS has also accomplished an impressive record of firsts including the first Harrier and UAV flight operations on an LPH.

Although decommissioning brings USS NEW ORLEANS' contributions to an end, all Americans will remain grateful for the sacrifices of the thousands of Sailors and Marines who have served on her decks. The pride and tradition of service felt by crew members and friends of USS NEW ORLEANS will remain forever in our hearts. You have given this nation nearly three decades of faithful service, and leave behind a shining legacy of excellence for others to follow.

I commend both past and present USS NEW ORLEANS crew members and wish you "Fair Winds and Following Seas"

Sincerely,

A. J. Kreckich
A. J. KREKICH
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy





Vice Admiral Robert J. Natter
COMSEVENTHFLT

Vice Admiral H. A. Browne
COMTHIRDFLT



COMMANDER SEVENTH FLEET

UNIT 25104
FPO AP 96601-6003

25 Aug 97



COMMANDER THIRD FLEET

29 August 1997

Dear Captain Perkins,

Dear Captain Perkins,

It is a pleasure to issue a sincere and hearty congratulations to USS NEW ORLEANS (LPH 11), as the ship completes its distinguished career. During its commissioned service NEW ORLEANS was faced with challenges and provided important contributions to our defense and foreign policy initiatives world-wide. Each time NEW ORLEANS deployed to SEVENTH Fleet, it served as a platform of choice for rapid response to any crisis.

On behalf of all your shipmates in Third Fleet, I extend my congratulations and best wishes to you and the crew of USS NEW ORLEANS (LPH 11) as you decommission this magnificent warship after 29 years of distinguished service to our Navy and nation.

The tens of thousands of Sailors and Marines who served aboard this fine warship during its 29 year career should march with pride for the important role they played in maintaining world peace during often troubled times. These Sailors and Marines truly represented the hard work, teamwork, perseverance, and pride that is our Navy.

USS NEW ORLEANS has made many important contributions to our nation's security. Since commissioning in 1968, NEW ORLEANS has completed fifteen overseas deployments. Serving with honor and distinction in the Vietnam War and the Persian Gulf War, NEW ORLEANS has time and again answered the call to go wherever needed to operate forward from the sea. From humanitarian assistance operations in the Pacific to support of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm in the Arabian Gulf, NEW ORLEANS has left an indelible mark on the stellar history of our Navy over the past three decades. NEW ORLEANS has performed each mission flawlessly and leaves the service of our nation with a superb record of achievement.

Through the years, SEVENTH Fleet commanders were filled with confidence at having such an effective fighting ship as NEW ORLEANS under their command. This ship and crew will be missed greatly.

Every current and past crewmember of NEW ORLEANS should take great pride in their personal and professional achievements. Our Navy is strong thanks to your impressive spirit and the tradition of excellence you leave in your wake. I wish each of you "Fair Winds and Following Seas" as you move on to new assignments in the fleet. Well done NEW ORLEANS.

Fair winds and following seas.

Sincerely,

ROBERT J. NATTER
Vice Admiral, U. S. Navy

H. A. BROWNE
Vice Admiral, U. S. Navy

Captain R. C. Perkins
Commanding Officer
USS NEW ORLEANS (LPH 11)
FPO AP 96627-1650

Captain R.C. Perkins
Commanding Officer
USS NEW ORLEANS (LPH 11)
FPO AP 96627-1650



Major General C. W. Reinke
CG, Camp Pendleton



5 August 1997

Dear Captain Perkins,

Since November 1968, USS NEW ORLEANS has more than lived up to her charter. From her participation in combat operations during the Vietnam and Persian Gulf Wars, to her contributions during the crisis in Somalia, she served our Nation with distinction.

Throughout her 29-year history, NEW ORLEANS has served as both home and base to thousands of Pendleton-based Marines, setting a standard of excellence for future amphibious vessels to reach for. All Marines who have served with her will feel the loss of her passing, but the pride in having shared in her achievements.

NEW ORLEANS' three decades of dedicated service stand as a mark of excellence in the annals of Navy-Marine Corps history. On behalf of the Marines, Sailors and Civilian Employees of Marine Corps Base, Camp Pendleton, you have earned the respect and gratitude of a grateful Nation. Farewell and Semper Par.

Sincerely,

Major General, U. S. Marine Corps

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



Admiral D. L. Brewer, III
COMPHIBGRU THREE



8 September 1997

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

Dear Captain Perkins:

The decommissioning of USS NEW ORLEANS (LPH 11) brings to a close a proud chapter in Naval Amphibious Warfare history. During her twenty-nine years of dedicated service, NEW ORLEANS has compiled a distinguished record of achievements. This record includes participation in combat off the coasts of Vietnam, Kuwait and Iraq, as well as humanitarian operations in Somalia. Steaming hundreds of thousands of miles during repeated major deployments throughout the Western Pacific and Indian Oceans, she has always been at the forefront, protecting American interests in every place, at every moment. NEW ORLEANS leaves a wonderful legacy; her service is the hallmark of a proud "Gator." This ship and her many crews have honored her commitment to our Nation.

The crew of NEW ORLEANS and the shipmates who served her before you have displayed superb professionalism and dedication, and upheld the finest tradition of the naval service. NEW ORLEANS has brought out the best in you and you have given her a spirit of pride and excellence that will long outlive the ship herself. You take with you the best wishes of everyone in Amphibious Group THREE for continued success throughout our Navy.

D. L. BREWER, III
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy