

# 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.

## 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.

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