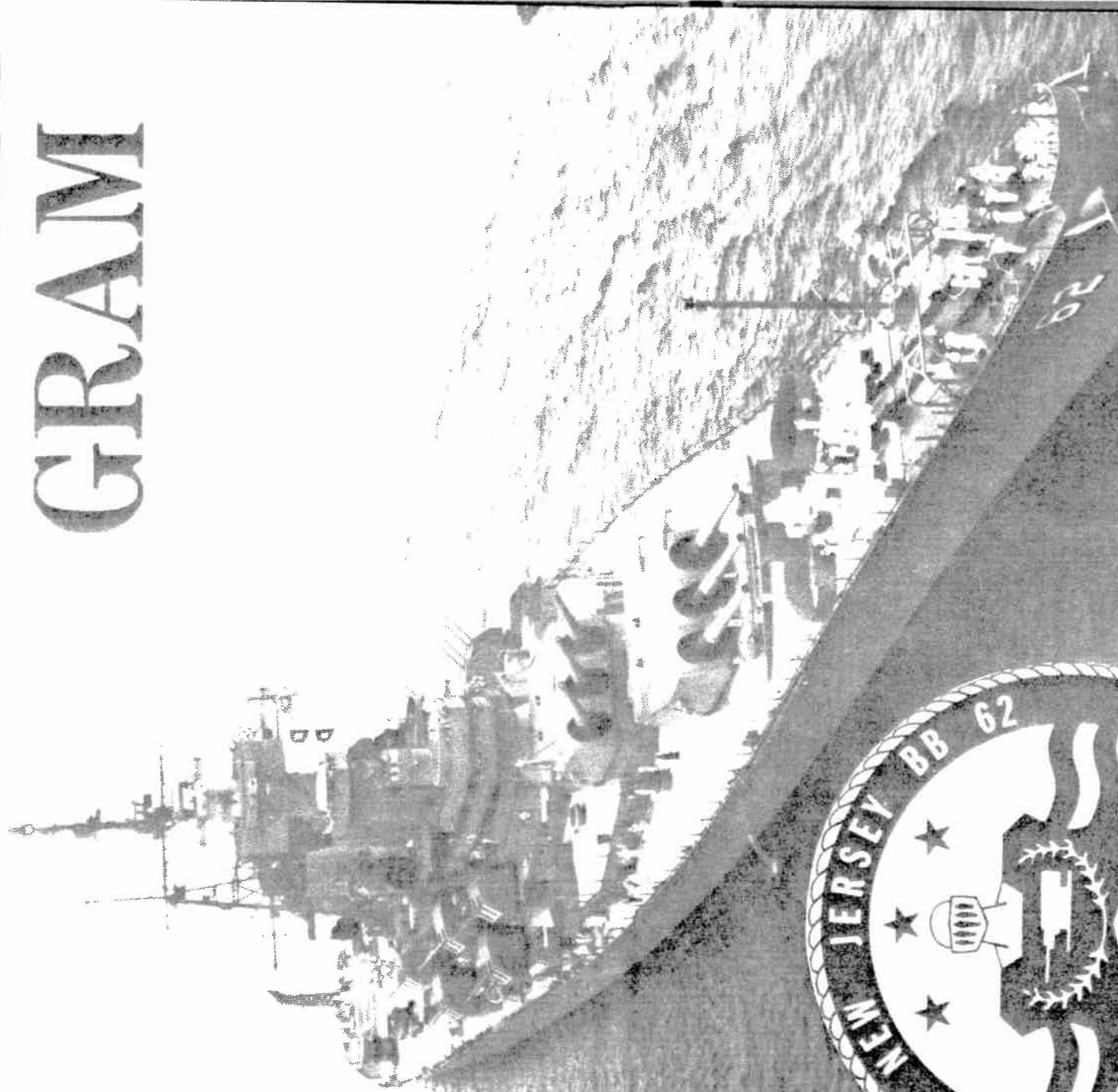


# FAMILY GRAM





UNITED STATES SHIP NEW JERSEY (BB-62)

31 October 1968

Dear NEW JERSEY family and friends,

When I wrote you last we had just completed our first firing mission at the enemy of freedom. Today we are still on the gun line having now spent a total of 32 consecutive days ranging from as far south as 270 miles below the Demilitarized Zone to as far north as 145 miles above the DMZ.

We supported ground forces near the DMZ from 30 September to 5 October. We had a bit of bad luck our second day on the line when a spotter aircraft on the way to spot for us was shot down. As the pilot was heading into the target area he reported receiving anti-aircraft fire. The next we heard from him was that his plane had been hit and was losing fuel rapidly. At this point, the aircraft was about 16 miles from NEW JERSEY. Chief Radarman, MacDonald Shand, our air controller in the combat information center, saw the plane on his radar scope and vectored the pilot toward NEW JERSEY, talking to him continuously, giving him our position and recommending courses for him to steer.

The two-man crew of the aircraft ejected as the plane came up our starboard side. Both chutes opened and the plane veered to port and crashed into the sea about 1,000 yards off our beam. Both crewmen waved, signaling that they were not injured. The guided missile destroyer USS TOWERS reached them in a matter of minutes. TOWERS put a life boat over the side and had them aboard about 15 minutes after their plane was hit. They were visibly shaken, but not enough to forget photo coverage. One of them, who had been shot down before, tossed his camera to a TOWERS crewman and asked that his picture be taken before he was pulled from the water. They were back up spotting for us the next day. I have recommended Chief Shand for the Navy Achievement Medal for his part in this drama.

While supporting ground forces during this period we destroyed or damaged numerous enemy ammunition storage areas, underground bunkers and artillery sites. The airborne and ground spotters working with us commented time after time on the amazing accuracy of our guns.

On 5 October we began our participation in Operation Sea Dragon. This phase of the war in Vietnam is designed to stop the North Vietnamese aggressors from continuing their invasion of South Vietnam. During the first phase of the operation we worked with Air Force spotters and hit military supply routes and staging areas.

On 10 October we entered our second phase of Sea Dragon operations and worked with Navy spotters from Yankee Station aircraft carriers. In a heavy downpour we bombarded the fortified Vinh caves -- used for military storage areas by the North Vietnamese aggressors -- about 75 miles north of the DMZ. We served notice on the enemy that he would not find sanctuary in the infamous Vietnam monsoon, for the monsoon cannot stop NEW JERSEY's "Firepower for Freedom". Our spotters reported that we closed some of the cave entrances and cut access roads to them in many places.

We also took under fire gun emplacements on Hon Matt Island near Vinh. Our spotter reported we completely destroyed one site and pushed a "slice of the island down into the ocean".

We left Sea Dragon ops 14 October and proceeded back to the DMZ where we again supported the Marines.

Firing simultaneous five and 16-inch gun salvos we smashed 22 enemy structures just above the DMZ, five miles west of Cap Lay. The first 1,900 pound shell was, according to our airborne spotter, directly on target. "You may not believe this", he radioed back, "but the first round destroyed two fortifications".

As our big 16-inch guns blasted the fortifications, our five-inchers were turned southward toward the buffer zone itself where they scored several direct hits on military structures. Speaking of the coordinated main and secondary battery firings, our fire control officer, Lieutenant Gerald Littell, said that there were no problems. "Today's mission didn't tax us at all", he said. "NEW JERSEY's fire control system is designed to handle multiple targets".

On the 20th we worked with the Army for the first time. We provided them with "Firepower for Freedom" in the II Corps area, about 54 miles north of Nha Trang. We blasted an enemy command post near Tuy Hoa destroying nine caves and five bunkers. We fired for nearly 90 minutes at the complex of 40-foot deep caves. The mission was in support of the 173rd Airborne Brigade. On shore, the naval gunfire liaison officer coordinating the attack said "that was my favorite

target -- you just wiped it out. The 173rd is sending you the brigade flag in appreciation".

Turret One did the firing on this particular mission and the turret officer, Lieutenant Joseph Edwards, said his turret "got off a salvo about every 45 seconds".

We completed our mission with the Army on 23 October and then moved back north toward the DMZ to aid Marines with our gunfire support again.

On the 26th we dealt the enemy some of our heaviest damage since joining the powerful U. S. Seventh Fleet last month. After the day's toll had been taken we had destroyed 11 military structures, seven underground bunkers, a concrete tower, nearly 100 meters of trenchline and cut three supply routes. Airborne spotters working with us also reported nine other military structures and five bunkers damaged plus seeing at least seven secondary explosions. As an interesting sidelight, one of the airborne spotters during this mission was the cousin of our Assistant Legal Officer, Ensign Frank Swayze.

The same afternoon the North Vietnamese gunners had their first try at us. In all they fired only ten to twelve rounds. It was immediately obvious why they had not shot at us sooner. They can't hit anything. Most of the rounds fell more than 500 yards from the ship. Their accuracy was so poor that it was difficult to tell whether some of the shots were meant for us or for other ships in the area.

Everyone got a kick out of Radio Hanoi's claim that Communist gunners had scored "direct hits" on us. Needless to say we weren't even scratched. In reply to newsmen's questions regarding Hanoi's claim of having hit us, I sent a message stating "... appeared from the bridge that six to twelve golf balls were driven off the Cap Lay bluff in our direction. Next time I will try to get more excited."

During our time in the Tonkin Gulf we have had many guests come out to the ship to see us in action. Among them was the Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable Paul R. Ignatius, who visited on 8 October. He was accompanied by the Commander of the U. S. Seventh Fleet, Vice Admiral William F. Bringle, who also visited earlier, on 4 October, and Rear Admiral William Harnish, the Navy's Director of the Office of Program Appraisal.

Secretary Ignatius' visit was part of his tour of Seventh Fleet Units. He spoke to the men of NEW JERSEY over

the ship's closed circuit TV system. He had these words for us:

"This is the culmination of what has been a very informative day for me -- the chance to come out here to NEW JERSEY and be on board during one of the 16-inch main battery firing missions.

"I can't tell you how pleased I am to be aboard your ship. One of the most pleasant experiences that I've had was to be at the recommissioning ceremony when we brought the NEW JERSEY back into commission. I won't forget that day in Philadelphia, and Captain Snyder was kind enough to ask me to be the speaker on the occasion. I was delighted to do it and I remember the pride that I felt, and all of us felt on that day, in seeing a great ship come back into service. So with that background and experience, it is particularly pleasing for me to have a chance to see you out here in these waters today".

Included is a photograph of the Secretary's visit.

Several flag and general officers also visited us our first month on the line. On 30 September, Lieutenant General R. E. Cushman, Jr., Commanding General of the Third Marine Amphibious Force was aboard. He was accompanied by his Chief of Staff, Major General E. E. Anderson, Vietnamese Lieutenant General Hoang Xuan Lam, the Commanding General of I Corps, and Brigadier General Dong Ho Lee, the Commanding General of South Korea's Second Marine Brigade. The following day we hosted Brigadier General Allen G. Pixsten, the Commander of the U. S. Army's 24th Artillery Corps.

On 2 October Lieutenant General Richard G. Stilwell, Commander of the U. S. Army's 24th Corps and Major General Ngo Quang Troung, Commander of the Republic of Vietnam's First Army Division were aboard for a visit. Then on 3 October Marine Major General Richard G. Davis, Commanding General of the Third Marine Division and Lieutenant Colonel Nu Zan Giai, Commanding Officer of the South Vietnamese Army Regiment in I Corps, observed a firing mission. I invited both officers into our main battery plotting room to fire a salvo. Although General Davis' round was right on, he had slightly mistimed the warning salvo alarm. "Who the hell fired that one?" asked Lieutenant Commander Carl Albrecht, our main battery officer. "General Davis, Sir", came the reply. "Oh", said Mr. Albrecht.

On 10 October our immediate boss, Rear Admiral David H. Bagley, Commander of Cruiser-Destroyer Group Seventh Fleet

and the Commander of Task Group 70.8, visited the ship. After having observed several firing missions, he returned to his flag ship and sent us the following message:

"I have been most impressed with the smooth operational performance and combat capability of NEW JERSEY ... Well done to all hands. Keep up the great work."

On 14 October, Rear Admiral Gerald E. Miller, Commander Carrier Division THREE and Rear Admiral William J. Moran, Commander Anti-Submarine Warfare Group THREE visited NEW JERSEY.

In an interview shown over our TV system, Admiral Miller, who is just reporting to his new command, spoke of the close relationship between air and sea power:

"We are most interested in tying the air effort in even more closely with the surface effort. That's one of the reasons I came aboard to see the ship today. We are tying the surface fire and the air interdiction program in as closely as possible in our joint effort to stop enemy military traffic into South Vietnam. The surface ships have done a great job in stopping water borne logistic craft carrying military supplies with a secondary mission of helping us on the beach. This ship is certainly making a great contribution already in that area. We look forward to a lot more and we are most anxious to continue to work with you. It is a pleasure to see this part of the Navy back in being and working so closely with our air arm."

Admiral Moran, on his second deployment in the Tonkin Gulf, talked about Sea Dragon:

"I've watched the evolution of this gunfire support business in Sea Dragon of which you are a part, and I think quite clearly the effort over on the beach has driven the North Vietnamese military logistic effort onto the waters where they are having to come down the rivers for lack of roads and railroads. The control of the rivers that we're getting with our aircraft and with the kind of firepower that this ship can provide is driving these military supplies clear out to sea. And when we drive them out to sea, as you all know, we really have control of the situation. I think the work you've gone through in the last year getting this ship ready to come out here and do its job is going to pay for itself many times over."

On 22 October we hosted Major General Charles P. Stone, Commanding General of the U. S. Army's 4th Infantry Division

and Acting Commander of the 1st Field Force, Vietnam; Major General Doan Van Quang, Commander of South Vietnam's Special Forces; Brigadier General Richard A. Edwards, Jr., Commanding General of the 1st Field Force Vietnam Artillery; Brigadier General Huang Vong Shi, Chief of Staff of Korean Forces Field Command Vietnam and Brigadier General Darric H. Richards, Commanding General, U. S. Army Support Command, Qui Nhon.

In addition to our many firing missions while on the line, we conducted numerous underway replenishments (UNREP). We averaged about one UNREP every two days while in the Tonkin Gulf and came alongside oilers, refrigerated store ships, ammunition ships and a general store ship. The work is grueling and the hours are long. On the 16th, for example, we took on 20 tons of stores from USS ALUDRA from 2:30 to six in the morning. Then we began our normal working day.

Rearming, of course, is the most difficult. Since each of our smaller 16-inch bullets weigh one ton, require 660 pounds of powder and use 500 pounds of contained material, we face special problems in rearming. Projectiles are received two at a time in specially constructed pallets. Once on deck they are moved about with the aid of one of our labor saving devices, electrically driven fork lift trucks, affectionately called "mules".

The powder comes in 428 pound tanks, six tanks to a pallet (known as six packs). The job of rearming continues long after we have pulled away from the delivery ship, for the ammunition and powder must be struck below. As you can see from the enclosed photographs, rearming is an "all hands" evolution.

Mail delivery was excellent while in the Tonkin Gulf. We received air mail and first class mail by helicopter nearly every day. Parcel post came over by highline during underway replenishments. I've enclosed two photos showing a replenishment at sea and a helicopter delivery of mail. Unfortunately when we move south the service is not quite as good. We had one eight day period when no mail was received. Those were blue days but that ninth day was a winner.

I'd like to thank you all for being so faithful in your letter writing to your NEW JERSEYMAN. Mail is the single most important factor to our morale. I cannot over emphasize its importance. You've been doing a wonderful job in your letter writing. We appreciate your loyalty.

Until now we have not thought it necessary to advise all of you of the state of health of your sons, husbands and boy friends. When we left Long Beach everyone was in a fine state of health and you all knew it. We are happy to report to you that the officers and men of NEW JERSEY continue to share that blessing of good health.

Surely many of you must wonder what would happen to your loved one if he should become seriously ill. We present our credentials to you with pride in hopes that you will be reassured and that the burden of separation will become one a little less difficult to bear.

NEW JERSEY boasts two medical officers, one specialist in general medicine and a surgeon. To assist our doctors we have 21 hospital corpsmen; each in his own right a specialist in X-ray, laboratory, pharmacy, nursing and the operating room. There stands ready on a moments notice a facility, staffed and equipped to respond to any emergency that may arise, 24 hours a day. Well, that's fine you say, but will it work? You bet it will, and does. Just ask Fireman Scott Caswell who had his appendix removed on the only active battleship in the world.

Essentially, we have a fine healthy crew whose daily requirements for medical care do not normally extend beyond an occasional aspirin. Rest assured, your man is getting the best medical care available.

We also have our own dental department on board. Since recommissioning, over 700 NEW JERSEYMEN have been examined and treated by our two dentists. Six hundred of these have taken advantage of our preventive dentistry facilities by having stannous fluoride applied to their teeth and having their teeth cleaned.

In addition to our two dentists, the dental department has four enlisted dental technicians assigned to assist them. Our senior dental officer, Commander Paul E. Farrell, received word on 3 October that he has been selected for promotion to Captain. Congratulations!

Turning from the health of our crew to the "health" of our machinery, the engineering department reports that they were far from being in the lime-light this month once the shooting started on the gun line. However, they were right in there pitching as indicated by the following figures.

NEW JERSEY's engineers have steamed over 11,000 miles in the past 30 days. We have used 1.6 million gallons of black oil and made nearly 3.2 million gallons of fresh water.



On the repair side of the picture "Berg and Sons Plumbing (Chief Shipfitter Cecil D. Berg), "Coy Associates Air Conditioning Service" (Chief Machinist's Mate Richard A. Coy) and "Haney Electrical Co." (Chief Electrician's Mate William H. Haney) working around the clock, did a thoroughly professional job of installing a five-ton air conditioner in the Sea Dragon Operations Center in just three days.

On the operations side of things, our ops department has continued its never ending efforts in keeping all electronics systems "GO", sending and receiving the great volume of message traffic, and providing timely combat information while maintaining liaison with ground and airborne gunfire support spotter personnel.

During our Sea Dragon period, the operations department took on the added responsibilities of targeting, mission planning and mission reporting, as well as continuing the routine tasks of coordinating, planning, evaluating and reporting information as required to all levels of command.

For our navigation department, the transition from "steaming as before" to gun line tactical maneuvering has placed more exacting demands on NEW JERSEY's quartermasters. Recent tasks have been directed mainly toward the pains-takingly accurate positioning of the ship, both in the water and on the charts, so necessary in helping to bring five and 16-inch guns to bear precisely on coastal and inland targets. Toward this end, our quartermasters have devoted themselves to extended hours, both day and night, in taking visual landmark bearings and radar ranges, operating the satellite and LORAN receivers, steering the ship, logging all maneuvers, actions and weather along our offshore tracks, and posting a vigilant plotting watch.

Our supply department reports that it too has been busy the past month providing support for freedom. We stock 61,000 items of general use consumables and spare parts in our store rooms. Of 525 requests for spare parts and urgently needed items during one ten day period, supply was able to fill 513 from on board stock.

Ship's serviceman third class Earl Whetstone has started making ice cream aboard. We now rival Howard Johnson in variety and quality. I don't think even Howard Johnson himself produces peanut butter ice cream -- at least not like ours!

We served 35,000 pounds of meat, 51,000 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables and 74,000 eggs during October so

don't worry about your NEW JERSEYMAN getting enough to eat. You might have to worry that some of us are, in fact, overweight.

Our vending machines dispersed 107,000 soft drinks in the same period. The ship's store and tobacco shop grossed \$69,000. Our dry cleaning plant was activated a few weeks ago and boasts "in-by-nine - out-by-five" service -- better than some cleaners ashore. We also started finished pressing of the crew's white uniforms this month.

Finally, the tailor shop was tasked with sewing on 465 "crowns" for our recently advanced petty officers. So you see we are well taken care of by our friendly supply department -- the "Shylock Estates" as I sometimes jokingly call these suppliers of our vital necessities.

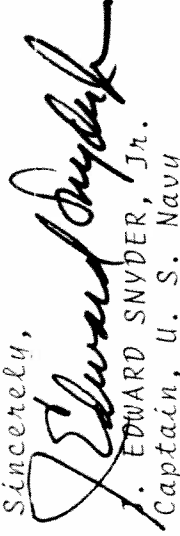
In addition to our newly advanced enlisted men, five of NEW JERSEY's Ensigns were promoted to the rank of Lieutenant junior grade on 20 October: Randolph Ghilarducci, Walter Mignola, Jr., Wayne Greenleaf, William Johnston and Jack Hayes. The ship's secretary, Chief Ships Clerk Clifford C. Hayter, was also promoted to CW04 effective 1 October.

Ninety-three NEW JERSEYMEN were advanced in rate 16 October as a result of the August tests. Their names are at the end of this familygram. Also more men will be promoted on 16 November, 16 January, 16 February and 16 March. Congratulations to all.

Reenlisting since I wrote last were Chief Steward Willie A. Turner for six years, Boilerman First Class William A. Steinback for six years, Boilerman First Class Sidney Walker, Jr. for six years, Fire Control Technician First Class Carter J. Gibbs for six years, Machinist's Mate Second Class Thomas W. Cartwright for four years, Boilerman Second Class Joseph H. DiMaria for four years and Interior Communications Electrician Third Class William D. Dudley for three years.

In closing I would like to thank those of you who have written letters to me since our cruise began. I know you miss your NEW JERSEYMAN and I know that he misses you. I do hope you will take comfort in the knowledge that his work is important and he is needed out here. We are saving allied lives every day. You and he are making a real contribution to the future of freedom.

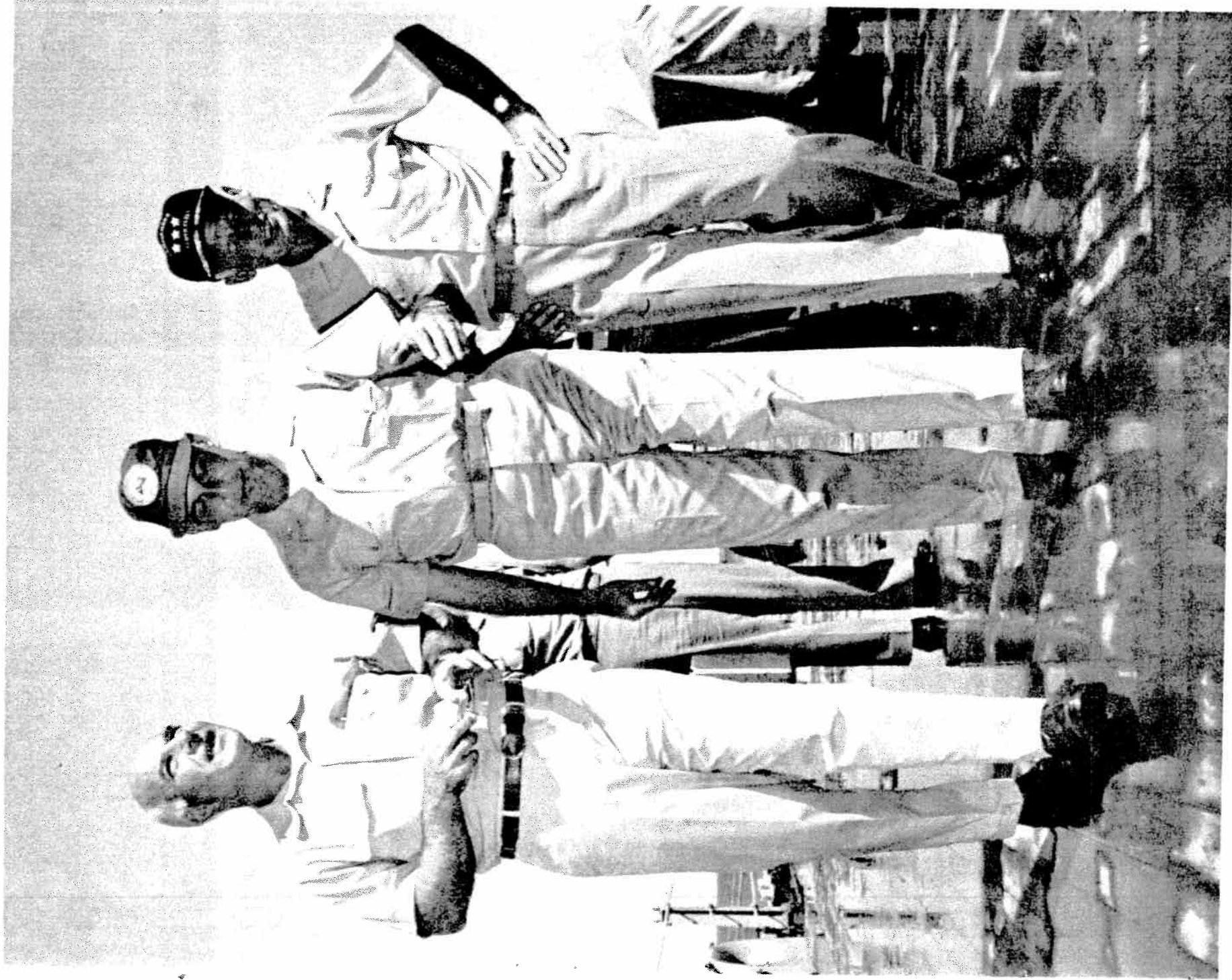
Sincerely,



J. EDWARD SNYDER, Jr.  
Captain, U. S. Navy

ADVANCEMENTS IN RATE FOR 16 OCTOBER 1968

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADVANCED TO</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADVANCED TO</u>
David Barthel	BM3	William Kurth	RD2
Thomas Baxter	SFP2	Joseph Landis	CS3
Paul Benner	ETR2	Paul Lanteigne	SM3
Robert Black	CS3	Edgar Lear	SFP3
Edward Blest	CS3	Luverne Lewerenz	BT2
Frank Borowiak	CS3	George Loughlin	BM2
William Borton	CS3	Silvio Lund	BT2
Ronald Boyer	QM3	Edward Lynch	RD2
Thomas Brennan	IC2	Edward Madden	IC3
Nathaniel Brooks	CS3	Carl Marsh	DC2
Michael Brown	ETR3	Charles McDonald	ETR2
Thomas Capanna	BM2	Terry McIntosh	EM3
Frederick Caron	ETN2	Sidney McPherson	QM2
James Caron	CS3	Robert Miller	CS3
Philip Coburn	RM3	Patrick Molina	EM3
Robert Coolman	QM2	David Moody	RD3
Jerry Daniel	BM3	Steward Neiman	RD2
Robert Dingman	EM3	James Nowak	BM3
Jeremiah Early	RD3	Raymond O'Connell	BM3
David Englund	CS3	Charles Oehme	ETR3
Mark Fain	SFM3	Eugene Pace	BM3
Franklin Fernandez	CS3	Jimmy Peace	EM1
Douglas Foss	RD3	Daniel Pfanx	SFM3
Robert Gillis	ETN2	Philip Pierce	RD2
Guerard Greenwood	SFM2	Gary Pitts	BM1
Dennis Griswold	BT3	Eulance Polk	RD3
Darryl Guy	BT3	Clifford Prisett	DC1
William Harris	BM1	Edward Rathbun	DC2
George Harvey	SM3	David Riddle	DC2
Andrew Hembree	SFP2	Michael Rohan	RM3
Kenneth Huey	ETR3	Leonard Sabocsik	EN3
Richard Imm	BM3	Richard Schmidt	BT3
Daniel Johnson	QM2	Lane Shafer	BT3
John Johnston	EM3	Ronald Shell	EN2
Ronald Johnston	CS3	Edmond Shepard	IC1
Ralph Jones	BM3	William Sosnowski	MR3
William Jones	BT3	James Talley	CS3
John Kennedy	BM2	Phillip Tasker	ETR3
Kenneth Kersch	MR2	James Taylor	SFP2
Steven Kesterson	SFP2	Donald Thompson	IC1
David Kish	EN3	Luis Torres	BM3
Roger Kolar	RD3	Dennis Uren	CS3
Thomas Kostenbauder	BM3	John Vertako	ETR3
Donald Kreie	EM1	Chester Whitney	CS3
Joseph Krick	BT3	Brent Wilks	SFP3
George Krzyzewski	RM3	Woodrow Williams	ETR3
Kenneth Kurek	BM3	Albert Wilson	RM2



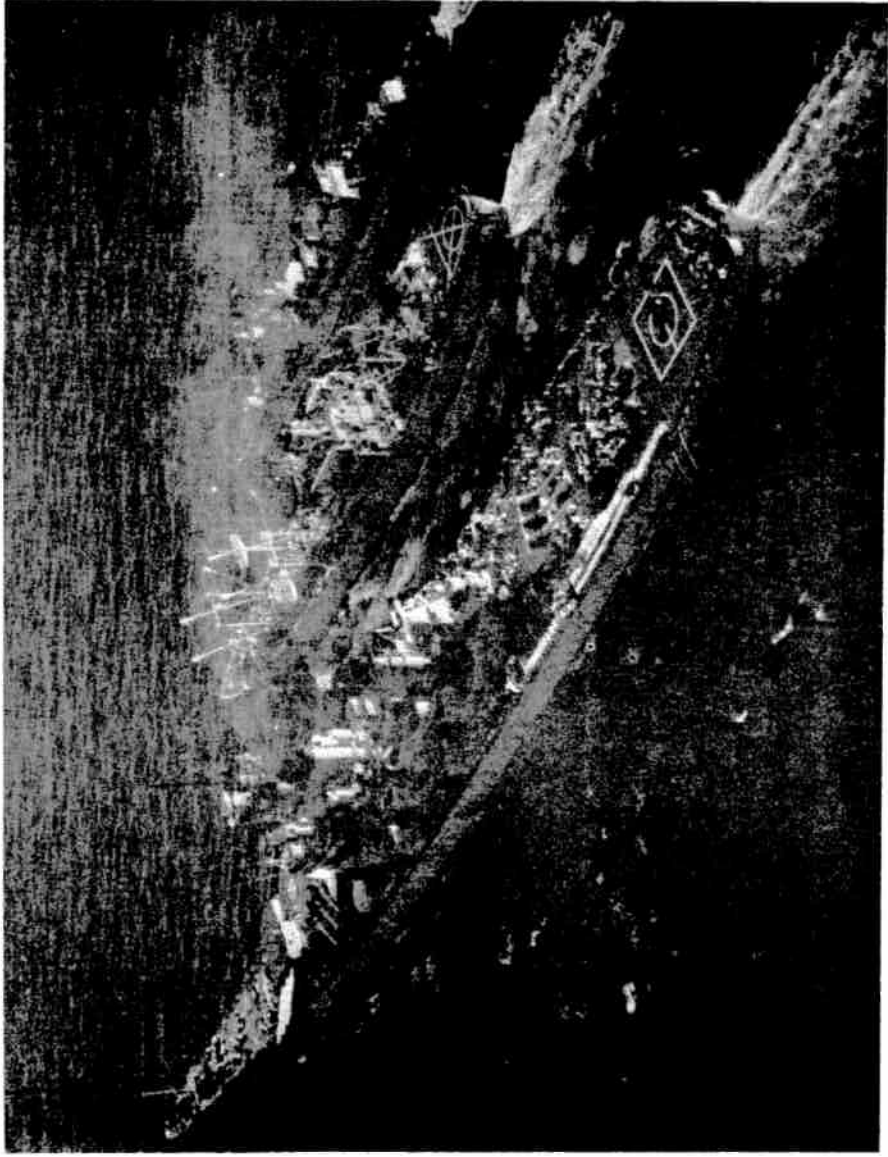
SECNAV and Vice Admiral William Bringle, Commander U. S. Seventh Fleet arriving.



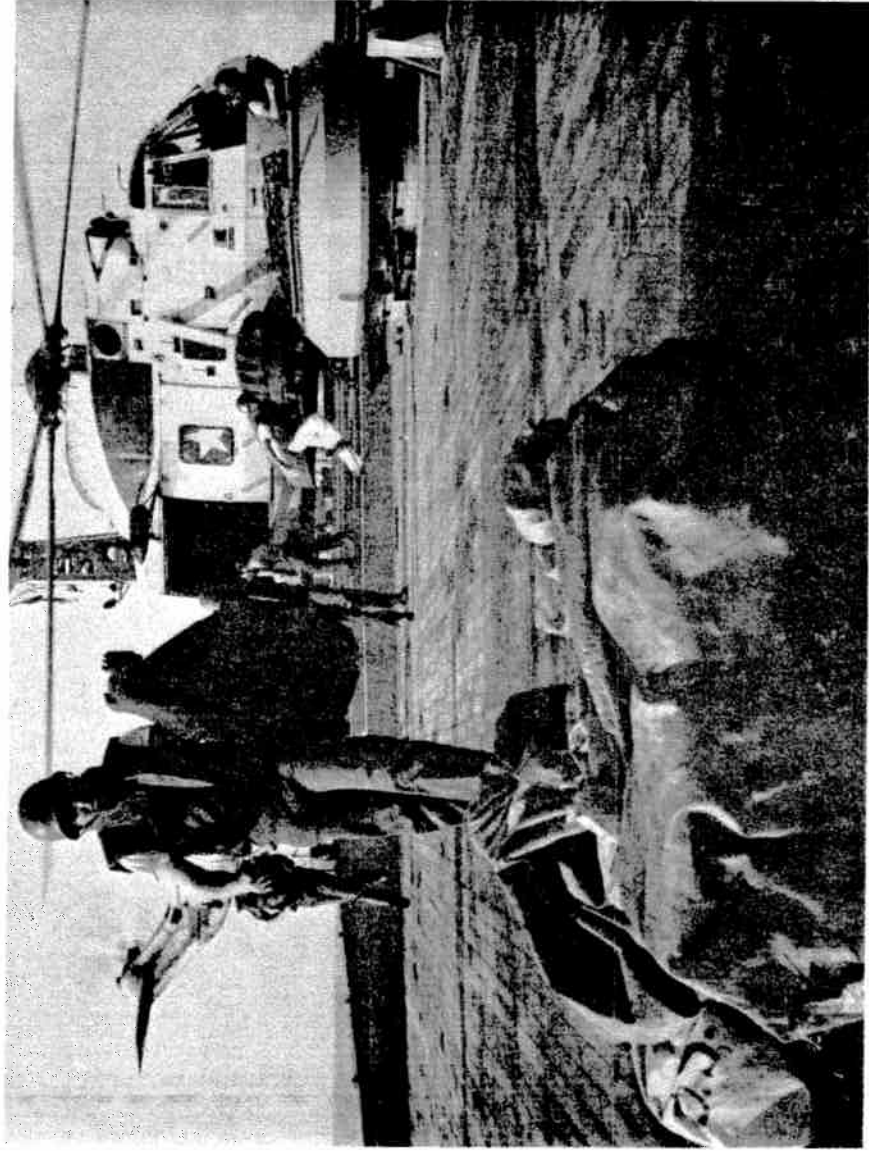
*General Troung and General Stilwell in main battery plot.*



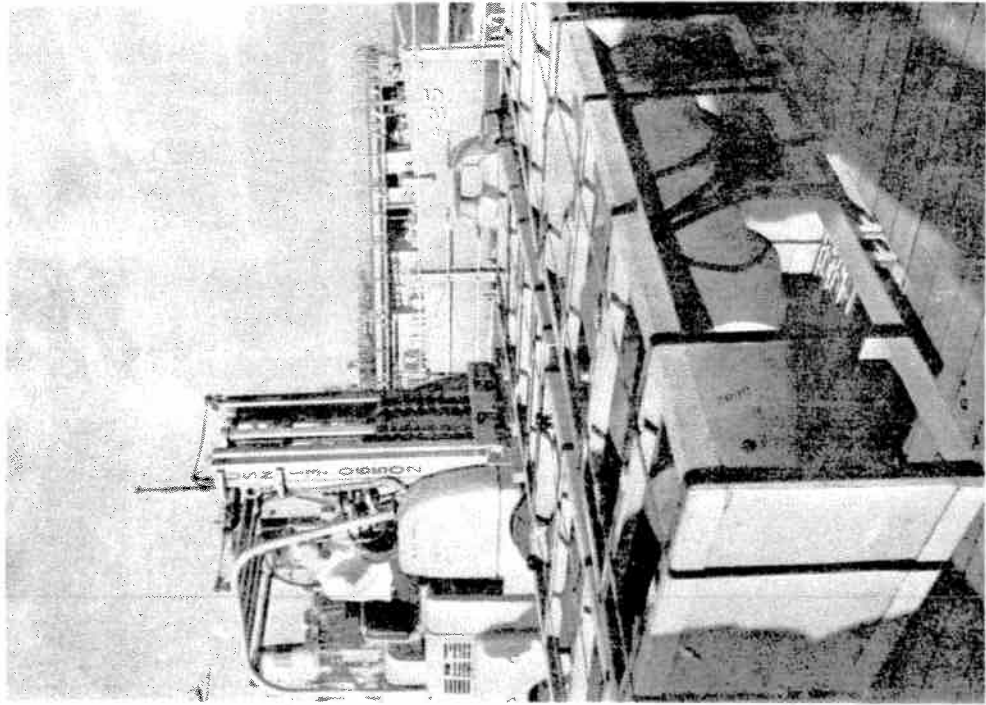
*Greeting South Vietnamese General Lam and South Korean General Lee.*



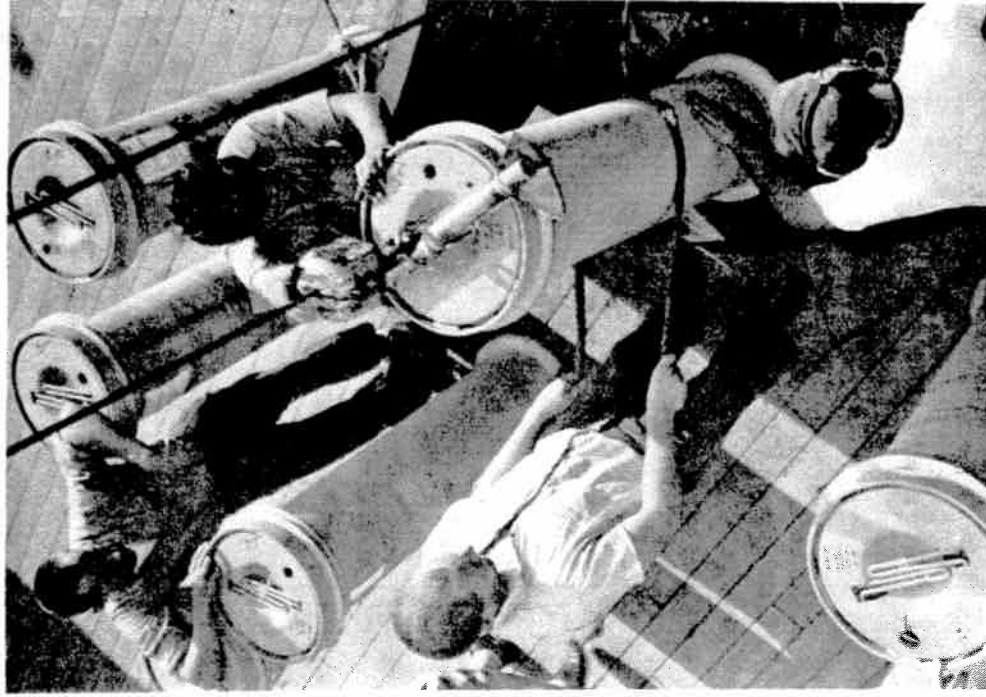
*USS TOWERS receives ammo from USS MOUNT KATMAI. Guess who's doing the same.*



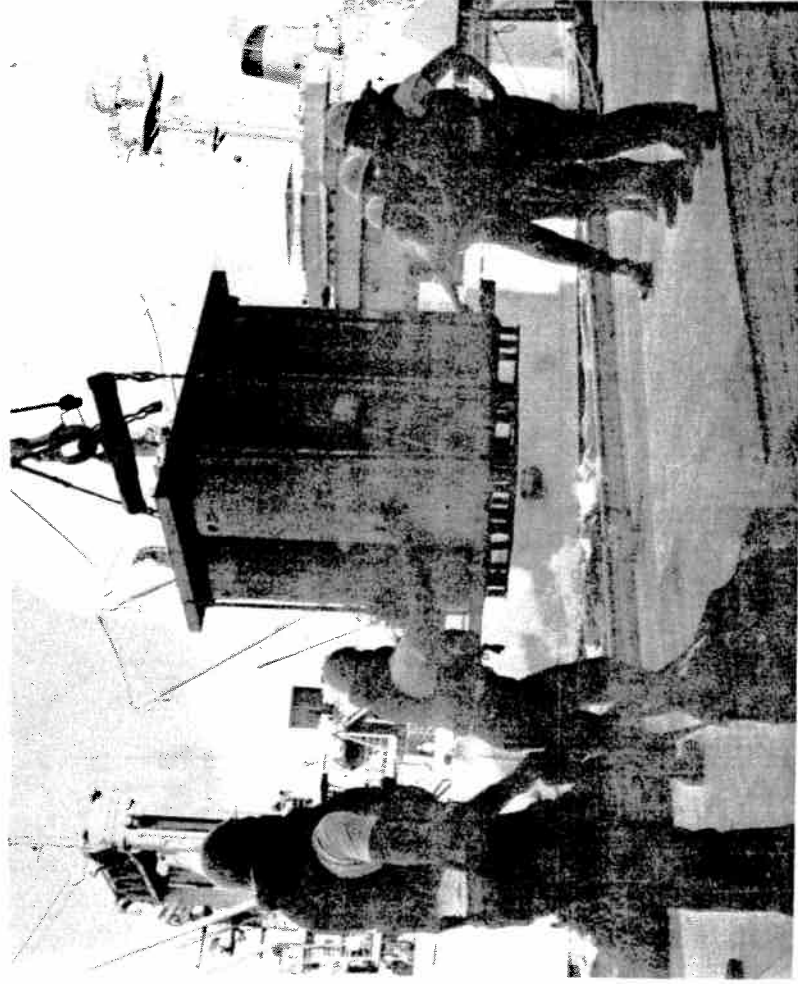
*Familygrams in reverse.*



*Moving 16-inch projectiles with a forklift.*



*Lowering 16-inch powder into our magazines.*



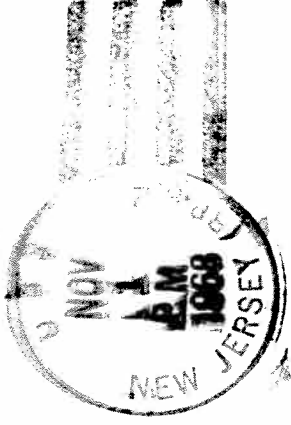
*Sixteen-inch powder coming over via highline from ammunition ship USS HALEAKALA.*

COMMANDING OFFICER  
USS NEW JERSEY (BB-62)  
FPO SAN FRANCISCO 96601

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

FOLD

POSTAGE AND FEES PAID  
NAVY DEPARTMENT



TO: *Mr. & Mrs. Paul A. Bejermany*  
*1 Hillside Avenue*  
*Bridgeton, Maine*

04005  
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