



WELCOME ABOARD

USS NEWPORT NEWS

OPERATION SEA DRAGON

Welcome aboard the USS NEWPORT NEWS, flagship of the Commander, Cruiser-Destroyer Group SEVENTH Fleet.

As flagship, NEWPORT NEWS serves as the command center for the cruisers and destroyers on Operation Sea Dragon, an operation designed to stop the flow of supplies from North to South Vietnam, and for the ships that provide valuable naval gunfire support to allied ground forces south of the demilitarized zone.

This booklet will introduce you to the ship and the staff she carries and tell you of their jobs in the SEVENTH Fleet today.

Sheldon H. Kinney
SHELDON H. KINNEY
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy
Commander Cruiser-Destroyer
Group SEVENTH Fleet

Lindsay C. McCarty
LINDSAY C. McCARTY
Captain, U.S. Navy
Commanding Officer
USS NEWPORT NEWS

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*Rear Admiral Sheldon H. Kinney,
USN Commander Cruiser-Destroyer
Group Seventh Fleet and Commander
of Operation Sea Dragon.*



*Captain Lindsay C. McCarty, USN
Commanding Officer of the Heavy
Gun Cruiser USS NEWPORT NEWS.*

USS NEWPORT NEWS, the world's largest heavy cruiser, was named in honor of the shipbuilding city in Virginia where she was constructed from 1945 to 1949. Newport NEWS is 717 feet long, has maximum beam of 75 feet, six inches, and displaces 21,000 tons. She is manned by 1200 officers and men.

Nine automatic 8-inch 55-caliber guns mounted in three turrets make NEWPORT NEWS unrivaled in firepower throughout the fleets of the world. Use of case ammunition makes these guns the fastest major caliber guns in the world.

Secondary and anti-aircraft batteries are composed of 12 dual-purpose 5-inch 38-caliber guns and eight rapidfire 3-inch 50-caliber guns. These batteries discourage close-range enemy air attacks with conventional weapons.

NEWPORT NEWS is a city in itself. She can distill 60,000 gallons of fresh water daily and can generate enough electricity to light a city of 40,000. The ship is completely air-conditioned.

A 120,000 horsepower steam tur-

bine plant, turning four propellers is capable of driving the NEWPORT NEWS at speeds in excess of 30 knots.

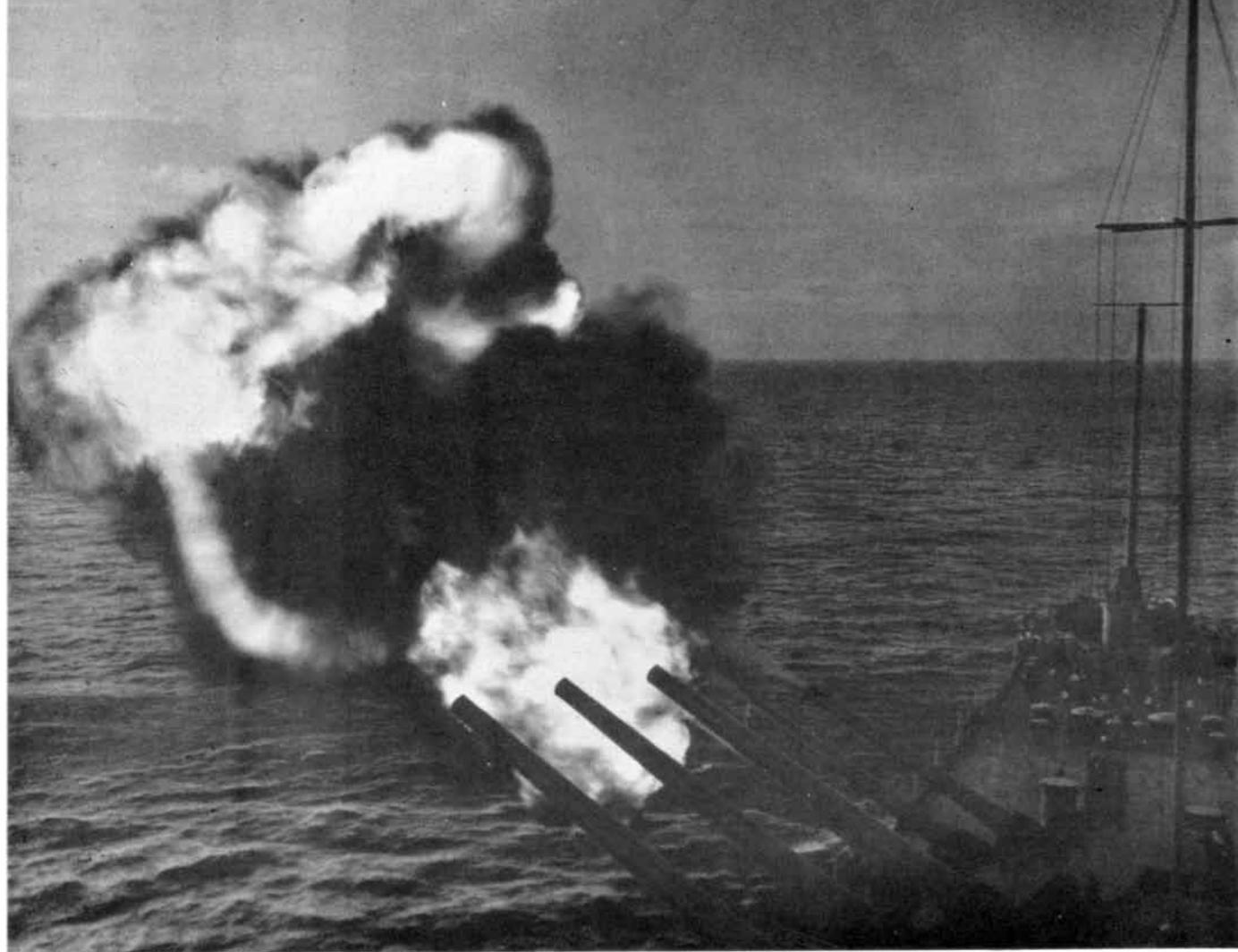
The crew although cramped for space enjoys some of the comforts of home, furnished by a post office, barber shop, laundry, and clothing store. Daily when at sea there is a newspaper published aboard ship.

NEWPORT NEWS can launch and land a helicopter from the stern of the ship. The helicopter provides rapid transportation for the Flag Staff and for the dispatch of important plans and orders to the forces at sea.

The ship has a wide range of facilities including a 28-bed hospital, a dental clinic, a machine shop, a carpenter shop, a metal shop and refrigerated spaces holding vast quantities of frozen and chilled food for the officers and crewmembers.

Presently, NEWPORT NEWS carries the Flag of Cruiser-Destroyer Group SEVENTH Fleet, commanding Sea Dragon operations in the Pacific.

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Patrol the North Vietnam coastline from the demilitarized zone northward and destroy North Vietnamese waterborne logistics craft carrying arms and materials to enemy troops in the South.

These were the orders received by the destroyers Mansfield and Hanson on the morning of October 25, 1966, and they marked the beginning of Operation Sea Dragon.

Although the widely-known Ho Chi Minh trail over the mountains and into the South is still a prime Communist supply route, until Operation Sea Dragon began the Tonkin Gulf was equally important to the North Vietnam supply effort. Since the Ho Chi Minh trail is a long and difficult passage at best, moving supplies over the gulf and inland rivers of North Vietnam was a logical step in establishing effective supply lines from North to South.

Since U.S. cruisers and destroyers first appeared off North Vietnam in search of logistics craft, the barges and junks that traveled the coastline have all been stopped by heavy gunfire.

Without the gunfire, the North Vietnamese still prefer the coastal route to the more roundabout rivers. Each cease fire brings hundreds of the waterborne logistics craft into the gulf, rushing their supplies toward the South.

Once the targets have been approved by the Sea Dragon commander, they are assigned to ships of the task group, normally several destroyers and a cruiser.

At a pre-determined time, according to plan, the ships will converge on one point and approach the coast, some of them firing on heavy North Vietnamese guns that line the coast, while others attack targets such as highway choke points or petroleum oil storage areas. Overhead, spotter aircraft from Seventh Fleet aircraft carriers radio corrections to the ships and report when the targets have been destroyed.

In short, cruisers and destroyers on Operation Sea Dragon have succeeded in depriving the North Vietnamese of free use of their sea coast and coastal areas as transport routes to the South.

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