



USS IOWA-CLASS BATTLESHIPS

THEIR GUNS WERE ALWAYS READY

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PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY OF THE MIGHTY IOWA-CLASS BATTLESHIPS – THE WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL WARSHIPS. IN THIS SIXTH INSTALLMENT COVERING USS NEW JERSEY, THE BATTLESHIP HEADS TO A NEW WAR - PART ELEVEN



New Jersey in dry dock as modernization work is underway to prepare the battleship for a new war.



Recommissioned for the war in Vietnam, USS *New Jersey* (BB-62) was little modified. She is seen off Oahu, Hawaii, on 11 September 1968 and although she appears festooned with antennas, in fact her communication suite was extremely austere. This symbolized a key problem of the Reserve Fleet. Communications equipment changes relatively rapidly and ships otherwise quite usable may be entirely unable to communicate with more modern craft unless they are given entirely new radio systems. The huge number of aircraft being lost to enemy action caused Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara to authorize a study aimed at determining what would be required to get *New Jersey* reactivated. This was done on 31 May 1967 and the study was returned as favorable so, during August 1967, McNamara made the decision to recommission *New Jersey* "for employment in the Pacific Fleet to augment the naval gunfire support force in Southeast Asia." This was done because *New Jersey* was in better condition than the other *Iowa*-class ships.

As the *New Jersey* was being recommissioned, Capt. F.W. Gooch, commander of the US Naval Shipyard in Philadelphia, accepted the state flag of New Jersey. During reactivation, *New Jersey* underwent a period of modernization that saw the 20mm and 40mm weapons removed (some of the 40mm tubs were left in place and made into swimming pools for sailors to enjoy during the very hot weather). She was formally recommissioned on 6 April 1968.



On 24 July 1968, *New Jersey* receives 16-inch shells and power tanks from *Mount Katmai* (AE-16) by conventional highline transfer and by Sikorsky helicopter lift. This was the first time heavy battleship ammunition had been transferred by helicopter at sea. During her sea trials following modernization, *New Jersey* set the battleship world speed record by achieving a speed of 35.2 knots and maintaining that speed for six hours.

