

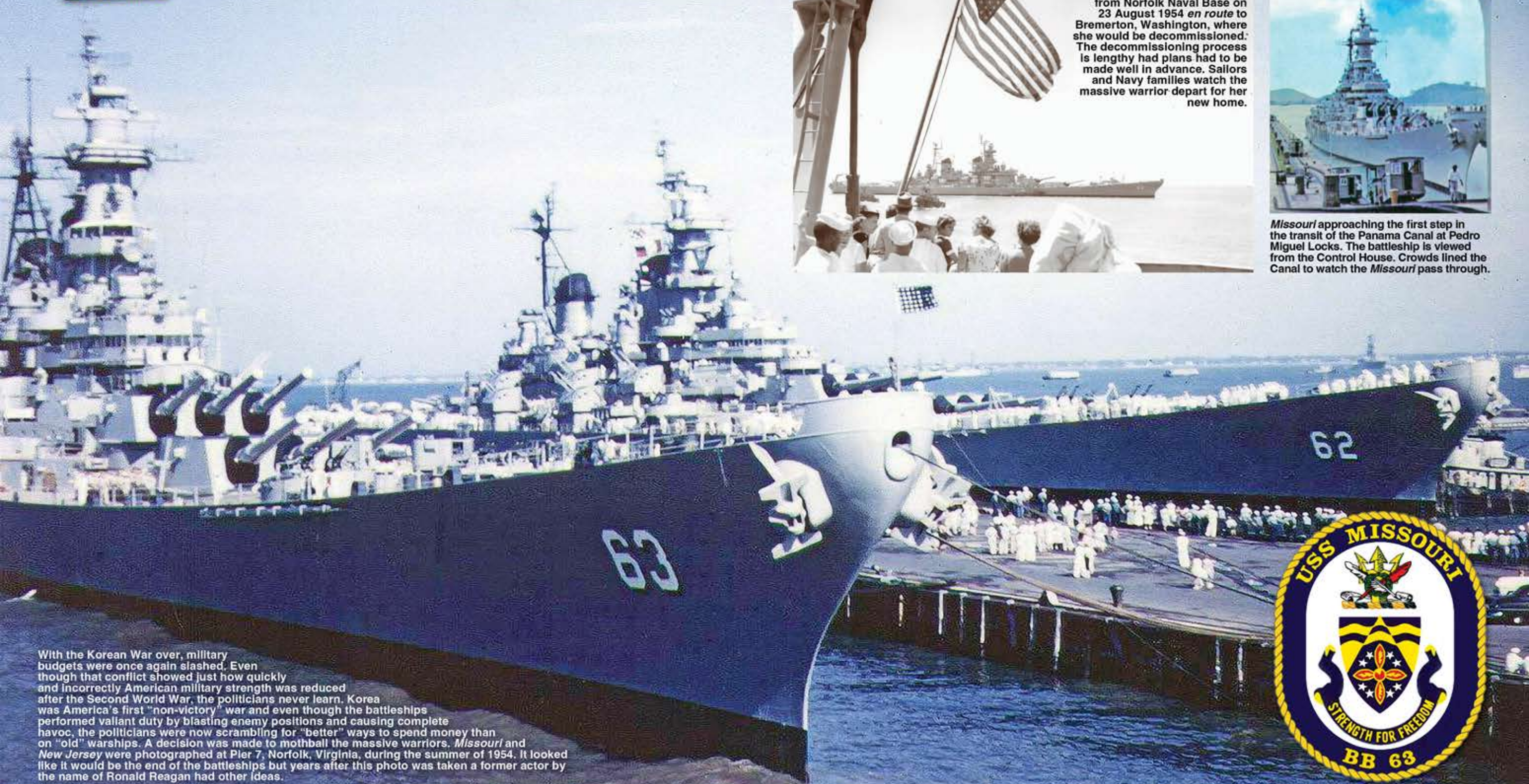


# THEIR GUNS WERE ALWAYS READY

OUR PHOTOGRAPHIC COVERAGE OF THE MIGHTY IOWA-CLASS BATTLESHIPS – THE WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL WEAPONS. THIS IS THE SEVENTH INSTALLMENT COVERING THE USS MISSOURI (BB-63) - PART NINETEEN

BY JAMES THOMPSON

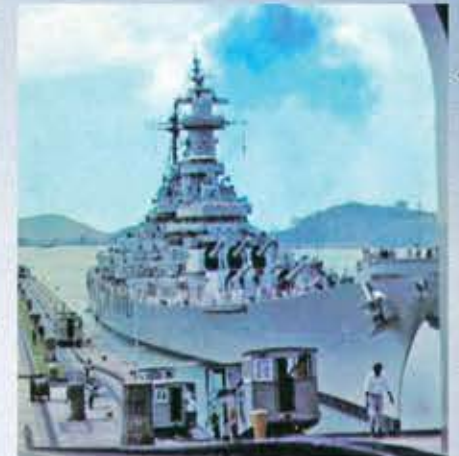
USS IOWA-CLASS BATTLESHIPS



Battleship Division Two: In line abreast formation on 7 June 1954 in the Virginia Capes operating area. This was the only occasion that all Iowa-class battleships were photographed operating together. Ship closest to the camera is Iowa. The others (near to far) are Wisconsin, Missouri, and New Jersey.



USS Missouri steams away from Norfolk Naval Base on 23 August 1954 en route to Bremerton, Washington, where she would be decommissioned. The decommissioning process is lengthy had plans had to be made well in advance. Sailors and Navy families watch the massive warrior depart for her new home.



Missouri approaching the first step in the transit of the Panama Canal at Pedro Miguel Locks. The battleship is viewed from the Control House. Crowds lined the Canal to watch the Missouri pass through.

With the Korean War over, military budgets were once again slashed. Even though that conflict showed just how quickly and incorrectly American military strength was reduced after the Second World War, the politicians never learn. Korea was America's first "non-victory" war and even though the battleships performed vallant duty by blasting enemy positions and causing complete havoc, the politicians were now scrambling for "better" ways to spend money than on "old" warships. A decision was made to mothball the massive warriors. Missouri and New Jersey were photographed at Pier 7, Norfolk, Virginia, during the summer of 1954. It looked like it would be the end of the battleships but years after this photo was taken a former actor by the name of Ronald Reagan had other ideas.

