

Office of the Governor

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NEWS RELEASE

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RELEASE: November 5, 1999

GOVERNOR'S WEEKLY RADIO ADDRESS DISCUSSES VETERAN'S DAY AND THE ARRIVAL OF THE BATTLESHIP U.S.S. NEW JERSEY

Gov. Christie Whitman provides a weekly radio message to radio stations throughout the state. Each week, the message focuses on a different concern or event of interest to New Jerseyans.

In this week's address, Governor Whitman talks about her recent trip to the Panama Canal to witness the battleship U.S.S. New Jersey pass through the canal on her final journey home.

The Governor also asks all New Jerseyans to pause to remember all those who have served the nation in times of war and peace.

Attached is a text of the message.

The radio message can be accessed by calling the Governor's actuality line at 609-292-3249. It will be available today, beginning at noon, and will run through the weekend.

The address is also available on our website at <http://www.state.nj.us/governor/radio2.html>.

Radio Message for November 5, 1999 Battleship U.S.S. New Jersey Arrives Home/Veterans Day

Last month, I had the unforgettable experience of paying tribute to the battleship New Jersey as she entered the Panama Canal for the tenth and last time on her final journey home. With scores of fellow New Jerseyans who traveled to Panama to witness this event, I helped salute this magnificent ship on that historic occasion.

Since she was launched on December 7, 1942 - a year to the day after Pearl Harbor - the New Jersey brought honor and glory to the United States Navy and to the state for which she is named.

Right now, the "Big J," all 45,000 tons of her, is nearing home after being towed 6,000 miles by the ocean-going tugboat, Sea Victory, from her mothballed berth in Bremerton, Washington.

When I watched the ship enter the Canal last month, I was amazed by the precision with which those who operate the Canal brought the New Jersey into the first lock, with literally just inches to spare. But it was even more amazing

to hear the stories of those who were seeing the ship for the first time since they had served aboard her on active duty.

I spoke with two men who had both served in Gun Turret 2 - but each in a different war. I spoke with others who recalled earlier passages through the Canal and yet others who remembered long-ago battles almost as if they had happened yesterday.

The stories were different, but they all shared a common theme - a great love for this great ship and enormous pride in their service aboard her. I know the people of our state share their pride and affection for this grand old warrior, just as we are proud of all those who have served America in our armed forces.

On Thursday, November 11th, we will again pause to remember all those who have worn America's uniform. Veterans Day gives us the opportunity to say "thank you" to those who answered the nation's call in times of war and of peace. Like the mighty battleship New Jersey, veterans of every service have kept the peace, secured our freedom, and made us proud.

I hope you will take the opportunity in the next few days to express your appreciation to the veterans you know. We owe them all our gratitude and our respect.

Thank you, and have a great week.

