

In celebration of Baton Rouge's bicentennial, The Advocate is sharing moments from the past, tapping its 175 years of serving the community. Throughout the year, we are publishing pages from our archives which capture some of the local, national and world happenings -- everything from wars and hurricanes to festivals and social events -- that helped shape our city.

We hope you enjoy them.

THE ADVOCATE

Telling Louisiana's story for 175 years



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Kidd finds home

By ALPHIE HYORTH
Advocate staff writer

The USS Kidd is the only ship Steve Higgins ever served on. A gunner's mate second class from Maine, he lived through eight major battles in the South Pacific and sailed under every Captain who ever walked the bridge.

"I'm lucky to be here to be able to do this. I just thank the Lord I got through it without a scratch," Higgins said.

He also helped retire the Fletcher class destroyer after the war ended.

Higgins has been keeping track of the ship ever since then and was in Baton Rouge Saturday afternoon with a number of the other original crew members for the official ceremonies welcoming the ship here.

"It was just like a home to me," Higgins said about the Kidd.

The ship was formally welcomed to Baton Rouge Saturday as a crowd flocked to the Mississippi River levee near the Centroplex to see the veteran destroyer towed to anchorage. A band played and streamers were thrown from the new Mississippi River bridge as the Kidd passed underneath.

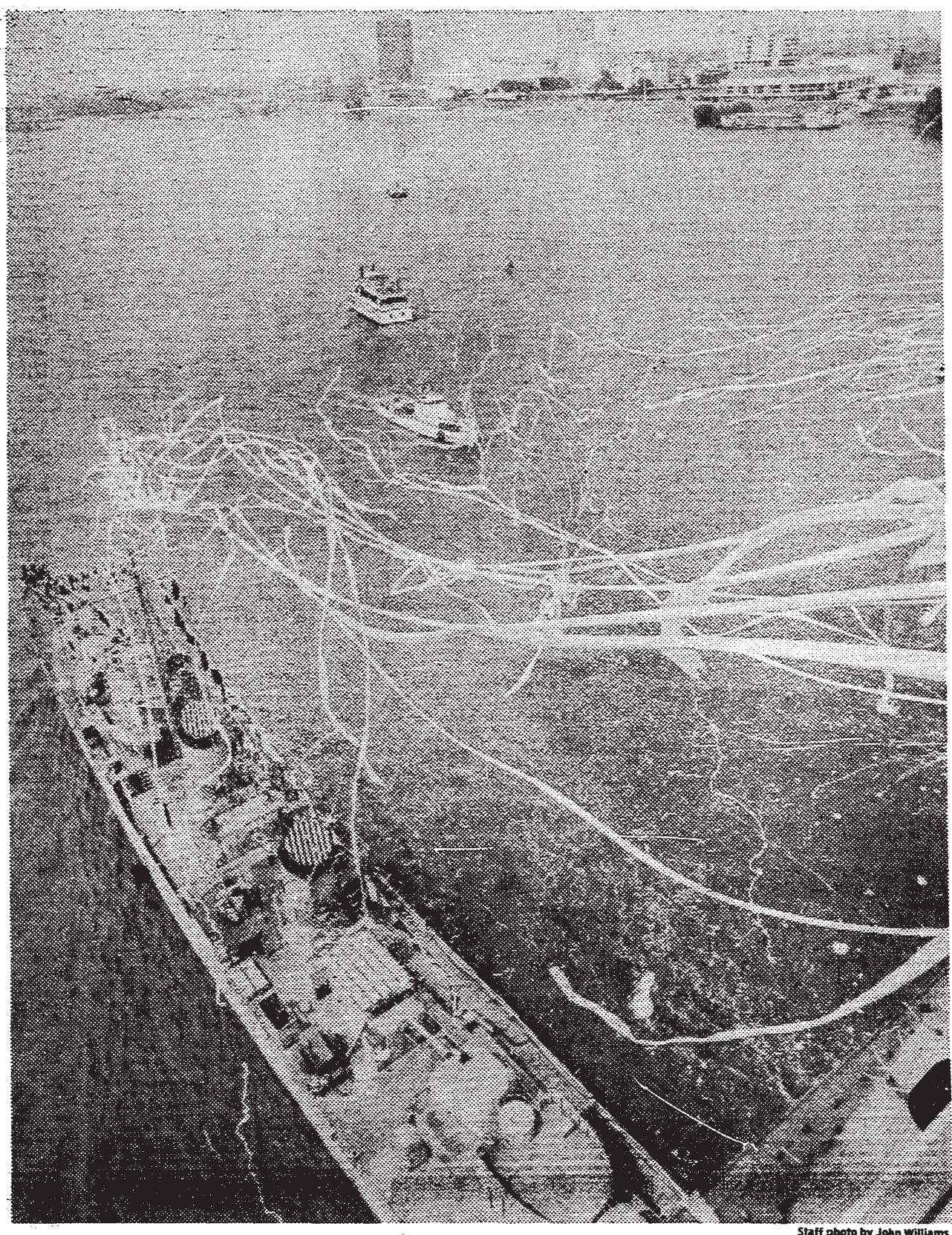
A flotilla of smaller boats accompanied the Kidd from just south of Baton Rouge where it had been moored awaiting the official ceremonies.

Since the Navy almost used the ship for target practice, Higgins was extremely pleased to know about the plans to restore it to its original condition as a memorial to war veterans and a tourist attraction for the state.

"This is the best thing that ever happened to me," he said.

Joe Greene of Chicago, another of the original Kidd crew, perched on the railing around the 40 millimeter anti-aircraft gun and gave his opinion of the ship.

"The old girl looks bad now. But all she needs is a little lipstick and rouge (See ★ KIDD, Page 3-A)



Streamers mark the arrival of USS Kidd

Staff photo by John Williams

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