October 17, 1998

Dear Commander Donaldson:

On July 17, 1996 we saw a United States military vessel travelling from the west towards the east, just outside the sandbar along the shore of Davis Park, Fire Island. It was about 6 or 6:30. We had returned to the beach with our children after a quick dinner so that they could play in the tidal pools on the beach. While they were playing, we noticed a boat just outside the sandbar towards the west. The bow was high and it cut smoothly into the water. We first noticed this boat because it was a rather large ship to be so close to shore. Initially each of us thought it must be some type of fishing boat. As it seemed to be taking its time getting close enough to see, we returned our attention to the children and our conversation.

We watched it as it moved directly in front of us from the west. It was moving moderately, not fast but not slowly. It was almost a sightseeing pace, from west to east along the shoreline. It was very subtle but it caught our attention because of both the type of ship it was and by how close it was. Once it was in front of us we saw that is was quite obviously a military fighting ship. It was battleship gray, with the characteristic I.D. numbers on the front; there was a lot of equipment on board such as the big globe which we assumed must be radar, and military gunnery. The ship was so big and close, that you couldn't capture the entire profile in one glance. It was large and complicated, and we were very impressed. It was a strong piece of equipment.

We discussed how neither of us had ever seen such a ship so close to shore, even though we have each spent many years at Long Island beaches. At the time we figured they must have been moving the ship from display in the Museum are on the West Side back to a base after the July 4th holiday. It was close enough that sailors would have been able to see people on the shore, though we do not recall seeing anyone on deck (we would have had the children wave). It was longer then we had anticipated. As we saw the ship go on and on, a comment was made that another piece of gunnery towards the end of the ship was lie "the icing on the cake".

We are 100% sure the ship was a military fighting ship. In an effort to be of assistance, we separately looked at pictures of military boats from the book <u>Jane's Fighting Ships</u>, ('96-'97). Independently we each matched our recollections to the pictures of a destroyer. Attached are copies of the pictures.

Sincerely, Alice Rowe and Lisa Perry.