

Cruiser USS Anzio Decommissioned After 30 Years of service



Sailors and plank owners of the Ticonderoga-class, guided-missile cruiser USS Anzio (CG 68) haul down the pennants, the jack and the ensign during the ship's decommissioning ceremony onboard Naval Station Norfolk, Sept. 22. Anzio was decommissioned after 30 years of service. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Bradley Rickard*

NAVAL STATION NORFOLK – With plank owners, former crew members, and families of the Battle of Anzio veterans looking on, USS Anzio (CG 68) crew decommissioned their ship at a Naval Station Norfolk ceremony Sept. 22, Naval Surface Force Public Affairs said in a release.

Retired Capt. H. Wyman Howard Jr., Anzio's first commanding officer, fondly remembered how the ship was brought to life three decades ago.

"Four hundred young men with the average age of 20 years old, 66% of whom had never been to sea before, ran onto Anzio and brought her alive," said Howard during his remarks.

"At the commissioning, I wrote the following letter to Team Anzio: 'This day marks the most significant milestone in the life of Anzio: she comes alive! ... Whether you fought at the Anzio beachhead, welded a piece of her steel, supervised her construction, or gave your love and support to us during 20 months of hard work, you are a valued member of Team Anzio. Thank you for all the hours, hard work, and sacrifices you made to make this day a reality.'"

The event comes just months after the ship's 30th commissioning anniversary. Hundreds gathered to celebrate the

ship's distinguished history and military service.

Anzio was built by Ingalls Shipbuilding in Pascagoula, Miss., and commissioned in Norfolk, May 2, 1992.

It is the second ship to bear the name Anzio and honors the Allied Forces beachhead invasion at Anzio and Nettuno, Italy, during World War II. The strategic importance of the Battle of Anzio to the overall Allied effort in Europe, however, is often underestimated. The two German corps engaged on the Anzio front were originally destined for Normandy. The success of the Allied landings on the beaches in France in June 1944 were due largely to the tenacity of the Allied forces at Anzio.

The Ticonderoga-class, guided-missile cruiser deployed for the first time Oct. 20, 1994, as part of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Battle Group. During that deployment the crew participated in operations conducted in the Mediterranean Sea, Indian Ocean, Arabian Gulf, Adriatic Sea and Black Sea. It would be the first of many Anzio deployments.

Over the years, the Anzio team supported Operation Iraqi Freedom, firing more than a dozen Tomahawk missiles while on station and served as the flagship for Combined Task Force 151 supporting anti-piracy efforts off the horn of Africa. The crew also picked up 10 U.S. Navy Sailors for transport and medical evaluations after being held in Iranian custody having been captured after their two naval boats unintentionally entered Iranian waters.

After decommissioning, the ship is slated to be towed in November to the Navy's Inactive Ship's facility in Philadelphia, Pa., where it will be in a Logistical Support Asset status.