

USS Bunker Hill Decommissioned



SAN DIEGO (Sept. 22, 2023) – The crew of the Ticonderoga class guided-missile cruiser USS Bunker Hill (CG 52) stand at attention during the ship’s decommissioning ceremony. Bunker Hill was decommissioned after more than 37 years of distinguished service. Commissioned Sept. 20, 1986, Bunker Hill served in the U.S. Pacific Fleet and supported Operation Desert Shield, Operation Desert Storm, and participated in the establishment of Operation Southern Watch. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Claire M. DuBois)

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From Julie Ann Ripley

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SAN DIEGO – USS Bunker Hill (CG 52), the 11th ship of the Ticonderoga class guided-missile cruiser, recognized more than 37 years of naval service during a decommissioning ceremony at Naval Base San Diego, Sept. 22.

During the ceremony guest speaker, Bunker Hill’s second commanding officer, Vice Adm. Rodney Rempt, USN, Ret., wished the current crew fair winds and following seas as they bid farewell to their ship.

Bunker Hill’s final commanding officer, Capt. Jason Rogers reflected on the service of his crew and those who came before, addressing the decommissioning of this distinguished vessel.

“With great pride, I acknowledge the dedication and valor of the sailors who served aboard this ship for the past 37

years,” said Rogers. “The USS Bunker Hill’s legacy is a testament to our commitment to national security. As we lower the flag one final time, we honor the past while embracing the Navy’s future. Our sailors’ unwavering dedication and the ship’s service will never be forgotten. Today’s decommissioning ceremony, September 22, 2023, marks the end of an era, but the spirit of Bunker Hill lives on in all of us.”

Capt. Rogers also retired from active service during the ceremony. Marine 1st Lt. Mathieu Rogers, assigned to 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, reflected on his father’s lifelong guidance. “You demonstrated that finding your passion and sticking to it, not giving up,” said 1st Lt. Rogers turning to his father, “is not only a rewarding thing to do, it’s the right thing to do.”

Bunker Hill maintained a crew of 40 officers, 31 chiefs, and 300 enlisted Sailors. The ship was built in Pascagoula, Mississippi, by Ingalls Shipyard Company and commissioned Sept. 20, 1986, at Charlestown in Boston. It was the first U.S. surface warship to be equipped with the below-deck, advanced MK 41 Vertical Launching System (VLS), a multi-warfare missile-launching system capable of striking targets in the air, on and under the ocean surface, and on land.

Bunker Hill operated in the North Arabian Sea and Gulf of Oman, supporting 10 Earnest Will convoys in 1987. The ship arrived in its new homeport of Naval Base Yokosuka, Japan the following year. At the end of January 1991 the ship launched its first Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles (TLAMs), a total of 28, against targets in Iraq from its station in the North Arabian Gulf, in support of Operation Desert Storm. It also supported Operations Desert Shield. In 2008, it was one of the Coalition ships from the British-led Combined Task Force (CTF) 150 maintaining a presence off the east coast of Africa in response to the recent events in Somalia. The following year it was the first guided-missile cruiser to receive a complete

set of upgrades as part of the Navy's Cruiser Modernization program including a new Aegis Weapons System, the Cooperative Engagement Capability (CEC), and SPQ-9B Radar. The guided-missile cruiser made full speed from off the coast of Panama to reach Haiti, joining U.S. military efforts on the Caribbean island devastated by a massive earthquake in 2010.

The first and second U.S. Navy ships named Bunker Hill honored the Revolutionary War battle fought primarily on adjacent Breed's Hill at Charlestown, Massachusetts, on June 17, 1775.

The battle occurred in the midst of the larger siege of the city of Boston, when the Americans learned that the British intended to deploy troops to some of the heights surrounding the city in order to command its vital harbor. Nearly 1,200 patriots marched stealthily onto the peninsula on the night of the 16th and 17th and dug defensive positions. Despite the colonists' secrecy, the British detected the move and their ships and batteries opened fire on the positions while they landed troops to carry the newly established works. American reinforcements during the battle raised their strength to about 2,400 men, and the British to more than 3,000, though not all the men on either side took a direct part in the fighting. American snipers in Charlestown harassed the British until their ships fired incendiary shot that set much of the town ablaze. In the meanwhile, the British resolutely assaulted the colonist's positions twice, and both times the patriots, with equal resolution, fired into the regulars and Royal Marines and scythed them down. The British regrouped and attacked a third time as the patriots began to run out of ammunition, and finally drove the Americans back at the point of the bayonet. The Americans inflicted twice the number of casualties on their assailants—an estimated 450 patriots fell as opposed to 1,054 regulars and Royal Marines. The colonist's valiant defiance imbued them with confidence that they could stand up to the British, while the crown's losses shook their officers and they often maneuvered prudently to avoid direct

assaults against entrenched patriots in subsequent battles.

The decommissioning of CG 52 supports department-wide business process reform initiatives to free up time, resources, and manpower in support of increased lethality.

Modern U.S. Navy guided-missile cruisers perform primarily in a Battle Force role. These ships are multi-mission surface combatants capable of supporting carrier battle groups, amphibious forces or operating independently and as flagships of surface action groups. Cruisers are equipped with Tomahawk cruise missiles giving them additional long range strike warfare capability. Some Aegis Cruisers have been outfitted with a Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) capability.

The mission of CNSP is to man, train, and equip the Surface Force to provide fleet commanders with credible naval power to control the sea and project power ashore.