Navy Decommissions Coastal Patrol Ship USS Firebolt



Sailors assigned to the coastal patrol ship USS Firebolt (PC 10) salute during the ship's decommissioning ceremony, Feb. 23 at Naval Support Activity Bahrain. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Mark Thomas Mahmod*

BAHRAIN – The crewmembers of Cyclone-class coastal patrol ship USS Firebolt (PC 10) marked the end of the ship's U.S. Navy service during a decommissioning ceremony Feb. 23 at Naval Support Activity Bahrain.

The nearly 27-year-old ship was one of 10 patrol craft currently forward-deployed to the Middle East in support of regional maritime security operations. Firebolt commissioned in June 1995 and began conducting routine coastal patrol operations under U.S. 5th Fleet in 2003.

"The crew is what makes Firebolt special to me," said Senior

Chief Engineman Paul Dixon, who completed two tours aboard Firebolt. “The history behind Firebolt makes everything we do more meaningful.”

Prior to operating from Bahrain, the ship helped secure New York City’s harbor immediately following the terrorist attacks in the United States on Sept. 11, 2001. Months later, Firebolt conducted coastal patrols in the Arabian Gulf during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In 2004, two Firebolt Sailors and a Coast Guardsman were killed as Firebolt provided security for the Khawr Al Amaya Oil Terminal in the Northern Arabian Gulf. After spotting a suspicious vessel, Firebolt deployed a rigid-hull inflatable boat and the suspicious vessel exploded in an apparent suicide attack.

“We thank the hundreds who served on this great ship and honor the brave Sailors and Coast Guardsman killed in the 2004 terrorist attack at sea. Their sacrifice will never be forgotten,” said Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, U.S. 5th Fleet and Combined Maritime Forces.

Firebolt has conducted several major rescue operations during its storied service. In 2005, the ship’s crew rescued 89 people off the coast of Somalia after their boat sank. Additionally, Firebolt rescued an Iranian mariner from a capsized fishing vessel in 2012.

“We have so many memories here,” said Machinist’s Mate 3rd Class Pedro Benitez. “We would be here working late hours in engineering, but still smiling and joking. It’s stuff like that that’s irreplaceable.”

During the decommissioning ceremony, Lt. Cmdr. Raymond W. Miller, Firebolt’s commanding officer, expressed appreciation

for his team.

“They’ve proven their dedication to mission success over and over again,” said Miller. “They’ve never let me or each other down.”