Navy Proposes Decommissioning 6th Fleet's Command Ship in 2026



The Egyptian navy frigate ENS Alexandria (F911) and the U.S. Navy amphibious command ship USS Mount Whitney (LCC 20) operate in the Red Sea in support of the newly established Combined Task Force 153, April 20. *U.S. ARMY / Cpl. DeAndre Dawkins*

ARLINGTON, Va. — The U.S. Navy has proposed in its 2023 budget to decommission the amphibious command ship USS Mount Whitney (LCC 20) during fiscal 2026.

The Mount Whitney has served as the flagship of the U.S. 6th Fleet since 2005, when it replaced the USS LaSalle (AGF 3).

The Navy is proposing the retirement of the Mount Whitney because its retirement "is mitigated by staff operating ashore," the service said in its 2023 budget highlights book,

citing a savings of $179.7 million over the Future Years Defense Plan.

The 6th Fleet staff normally is stationed ashore in Naples, Italy. The Mount Whitney is homeported in nearby Gaeta.

The Mount Whitney is a Blue Ridge-class amphibious command ship. It was commissioned on Jan. 16, 1971, and served until 2005 as the flagship of the U.S. 2nd Fleet. It underwent conversion to a Military Sealift Command ship and is operated by a hybrid Navy/Civilian Mariner crew but remains a commissioned ship under the command of a Navy captain. If retired in 2026, the ship will have served 55 years.

Currently, the Mount Whitney is deployed to the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden where it serves as the flagship of commander, Task Force 153, a new task force of the Combined Maritime Forces, an international coalition operating under commander, U.S. 5th Fleet/Naval Forces Central Command.