

USS Cowpens Decommissioned After 33 Years of Service



NAVAL BASE SAN DIEGO (Aug. 27, 2024) – Retired Vice Adm. Edward Moore delivers remarks at the decommissioning ceremony for the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Cowpens (CG 63) at Naval Base San Diego Aug. 27, 2024. Cowpens was commissioned in 1991, marking 33 years as a United States Ship. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Claire M. DuBois)

From Chief Petty Officer Mark Faram, 28 August 2024

SAN DIEGO – Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Cowpens (CG 63) was recognized for more than 33 years of naval service during the decommissioning ceremony at Naval Base San Diego on August 27.

Hundreds gathered to celebrate the ship's distinguished history of naval service. Cowpens's Commanding Officer, Cmdr. Jac O. Ullman III spoke of the ship's legacy and its crew.

“A guiding principle in the last chapter onboard, has been to honor the legacy of Cowpens”, said Ullman. “To honor the grit, determination, and creativity of the Continental Army and Militiamen from that cold battlefield. To honor the service of those on the first USS Cowpens – CVL 25 – and to honor the legacy of those who served before us during Mighty Moo’s 33 year career... We have done just that.”

USS Cowpens participated in many operations and exercises, contributing significantly to U.S. naval power projection and security. From enforcing no-fly zones to conducting maritime security operations, the ship demonstrated versatility and capability across a range of mission profiles.

One of the notable milestones in Cowpens’s history was its participation in Operation Enduring Freedom. Tasked with providing air defense and maritime security. The ship played a vital role in the early stages of the global war on terror, showcasing the Navy’s ability to respond swiftly to emerging threats.

The ship’s prowess was further demonstrated during Operation Iraqi Freedom, providing crucial support for coalition forces in the Persian Gulf region. From conducting surveillance to launching precision strikes, USS Cowpens contributed to the success of coalition efforts to stabilize Iraq.

“From 1983 onward, these ships [Cowpens] defended our nation’s interests, supported critical combat operations, and ensured freedom of the seas; more than that, they brought AEGIS and VLS, revolutionary technologies into the hands of our warfighters”, said Rear Adm. Ted LeClair, Deputy Commander of Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

“Cowpens, the seventeenth AEGIS ship built, provided the value of these advancements. As AEGIS and VLS have evolved in both

the Cruiser and Destroyer variants, Cowpens continuously demonstrated their effectiveness and lethality.”

Also in attendance was Cowpens sponsor, Mrs. Lucy Mustin and the first commanding officer of Cowpens, Vice Adm. Edward Moore (Ret.).

“At the end of this day, no matter when we were crewmembers, we can all agree we served on the best ship, the most formidable warship, in the best Navy, and in the best country in the world”, said Moore. “I know in my heart that long after we leave this pier today, we will, from time to time, continue to reflect on our service to country, ship, and each other.”

Additionally, the ship played a key role in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations, providing aid to regions devastated by natural disasters such as the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan. These operations underscored the Navy’s commitment to global stability and humanitarian values.

The second ship to bear the name, Cowpens was built in Bath, Maine, and commissioned March 9, 1991, in Charleston, South Carolina. Named after the pivotal Battle of Cowpens during the American Revolutionary War, the ship has faithfully served the nation for more than three decades, embodying the valor and resilience of its namesake.

After the decommissioning and inactivation, the ship will be towed to the Navy’s Inactive Ship facility in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii where it will be in a Logistic Support Asset (LSA) status.

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.