

DECOMMISSIONING CEREMONY



UNITED STATES SHIP
VEGA
(AF-59)

MARE ISLAND NAVAL SHIPYARD
VALLEJO, CALIFORNIA

29 APRIL 1977

DECOMMISSIONING OF A NAVY SHIP

The Decommissioning ceremony terminates the active Naval service of ships other than those lost at sea. The ceremony is a somber occasion, as befits the conclusion of a proud and illustrious career as a United States Naval Ship.

The commission pennant is believed to date from the 17th century when the Dutch were at war with the English. The Dutch admiral hoisted a broom at his masthead to indicate his intention to sweep the English from the sea. This gesture was answered by the English admiral, who hoisted a horsewhip, indicating his intention to subdue the Dutch. The English were victorious and ever since, the narrow "coach-whip" pennant has been adopted by all nations as the distinction of a ship of war.

The modern United States Navy Commission pennant is blue at the hoist with a union of seven white stars and a horizontal red and white stripe at the fly.

By tradition, the commission pennant is passed to the commanding officer of the ship at the decommissioning ceremony.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

CAPT F.T. THOMPSON, USN	10 Nov 55 - 18 Jul 56
CAPT E.F. STEFFANIDES, JR., USN	18 Jul 56 - 13 Sep 57
CAPT S.W. CARPENTER, USN	13 Sep 57 - 11 Apr 58
CAPT F.C. RYDEEN, USN	11 Apr 58 - 02 May 59
CAPT C.R. CHANDLER, USN	02 May 59 - 15 Apr 60
CAPT H.E. SCHMIDT, USN	15 Apr 60 - 18 May 61
CAPT L.P. SPEAR, USN	18 May 61 - 09 Oct 62
CAPT E. MUHLENFELD, USN	09 Oct 62 - 15 Oct 63
CAPT W.B. PROVOST, USN	15 Oct 63 - 22 Aug 64
CAPT R.E. HILL, USN	22 Aug 64 - 08 Sep 65
CAPT I.A. MELUSKY, USN	08 Sep 65 - 05 Aug 66
CAPT D.W. ALDERTON, USN	05 Aug 66 - 14 Oct 67
CAPT J.C. BURKART, USN	14 Oct 67 - 18 Mar 69
CAPT J.A. DONOVAN, USN	18 Mar 69 - 07 Jul 70
CAPT J.T. WELLS, USN	07 Jul 70 - 10 Feb 72
CDR L.R. JEFFERIS, USN	10 Feb 72 - 04 Jan 74
CDR R.E. BROWN, JR., USN	04 Jan 74 - 09 Jan 76
CDR V.V. MCGEE, USNR	09 Jan 76 - 22 Jun 76
CAPT J.R. ROCKWOOD, USN	22 Jun 76 - 22 Sep 76
CDR F. J. BARNES, III, USN	23 Sep 76 -

SHIP'S HISTORY

USS VEGA (AF-59) has been the third ship of the U.S. Navy to bear the name of VEGA, the brightest star in the constellation LYRA and the sixth brightest star in the sky.

On 7 June 1954, the keel of VEGA was laid at the Ingalls Shipbuilding Corporation in Pascagoula, Mississippi. She was commissioned on 10 November 1955. All her active service has been with the Pacific Fleet.

In March of 1956, VEGA began the first of her many deployments to the Far East and Western Pacific. The recent 1976 deployment concluded a long and productive career of twenty-five such deployments. During a typical four to seven month deployment, VEGA would steam over 50,000 nautical miles, visiting the countries of Taiwan, Japan, Okinawa, Thailand, Korea, and the Philippines, and the ports of Singapore, Hong Kong and Agana, Guam. In addition, the ship would replenish ships from the Navies of the United States, Japan, Taiwan, Australia and the Republic of South Korea and participate in several major allied naval exercises.

VEGA has undergone several major overhaul periods to improve her efficiency as an important member of a modern task force. Some of VEGA's significant additions include cargo elevators, the raised flight deck to enable helicopters to land and refuel, the engineering plant conversion to cleaner burning Navy distillate fuel and a major habitability

upgrade in the berthing areas.

VEGA is authorized to display the following awards and decorations, all of which were awarded during the recent Vietnam conflict: National Defense Service Medal, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal and Meritorious Unit Commendation. The ship also was recently awarded her second and third Armed Forces Expeditionary Medals for her contributions during the 1974 and 1975 deployment. She participated in operation "EAGLE PULL", the amphibious ready group evacuation off the coast of Cambodia and, along with other SEVENTH Fleet units, in operation "FREQUENT WIND" off the coast of Vietnam. In the latter, VEGA was the primary ship assigned to provide refugee support and supply the "New Life Flotilla" of the Vietnamese relocation. During this same deployment, she played an instrumental role in the rescue of the SS MAYAGUEZ, a merchant ship captured by the Cambodian rebels.

Shortly after returning from the 1976 deployment, VEGA was notified that she would be decommissioned. After a brief standdown period at Naval Supply Center, Oakland, she shifted berths to Mare Island Naval Shipyard where, on 29 April 1977, VEGA was decommissioned and stricken from the Naval Register.



SHIP DATA AND INFORMATION

BUILT BY: Ingalls Shipbuilding Corporation
Pascagoula, Mississippi

COMMISSIONED: 10 November 1955

LENGTH: 517 Feet

BEAM: 72 Feet

DISPLACEMENT: 15,500 Tons

DRAFT: 27 Feet

ARMAMENT: Twin 3 inch 50 rapid fire mounts

MANNING: 15 Officers/250 Enlisted

PRIMARY MISSION: Provide underway logistics support
for units of the U.S. Pacific Fleet

AWARDS

Since commissioning in 1955, USS VEGA (AF-59) has been awarded and is authorized to display the following decorations and medals:

Meritorious Unit Commendation
National Defense Medal
Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal
(three awards)
Vietnam Service Medal
(eleven awards)
Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal

PROGRAM

DECOMMISSIONING CEREMONY OF UNITED STATES SHIP VEGA

29 April 1977

NATIONAL ANTHEM
Navy Band San Francisco

INVOCATION
LCDR Wayne L. Bouck, CHC, USN

INTRODUCTION
Commanding Officer

REMARKS
CAPT C.S. CHRISTENSEN, JR., USN
Commander Service Group ONE

READING OF ORDERS,
DECOMMISSIONING AND
RELINQUISHMENT OF COMMAND
Commanding Officer

BENEDICTION
LCDR Robert C. Mellett, CHC, USN