

Contributed by Robert M. Cieri

DECOMMISSIONING CEREMONY



U.S.S. SANCTUARY AH-17

1000 FRIDAY, 28 MARCH 1975

NAVAL BASE
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

U.S.S. Sanctuary

The hospital ship USS *Sanctuary* (AH-17) takes her name from a word meaning refuge and protection. Originally built as the SS *Marine Owl* by Sun Shipbuilding Corporation, Chester, Pennsylvania, she was launched on 15 August 1944, converted to a hospital ship at Todd Shipyard, Hoboken, New Jersey and commissioned on 20 June 1945.

Sanctuary evacuated POW's from Japan at the close of World War II before decommissioning in March 1946. In June 1966, she was recommissioned and deployed to the South China Sea off Danang, South Vietnam. Her mission was to provide the latest in hospital facilities for United States and Allied forces in the I Corps Tactical Zone and Military Region One, as well as humanitarian care for civilians. *Sanctuary* was again decommissioned in December 1971 and recommissioned on 18 November 1972 at Hunter's Point Naval Shipyard after a ten-month overhaul reconfiguration as a dependent support ship.

Following recommissioning preparations were undertaken for a Spring deployment and eventual homeport shift to a forward deployment area. After completion of refresher training in San Diego in February, the ship returned to Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, San Francisco, California. The next several months were devoted to the repair and overhaul of major ship and hospital equipment. After a brief underway period in early April, the ship was informed that the overseas deployment and homeport change scheduled for May 1973 had been postponed until late Summer. *Sanctuary* returned to the shipyard for completion of modifications and improvements. Shortly thereafter the scheduled deployment was again postponed. The ship received new orders in July and the remaining summer months were spent re-preparing the ship for a three-month "Navy Handclasp" cruise to South America.

On 1 October, 1973 *Sanctuary* passed beneath the Golden Gate Bridge for the last time enroute to her new homeport of Mayport, Florida and her temporary deployment in support of a State Department sponsored good will mission. Onboard the ship was a thirteen-man Seabee detachment equipped for civic action projects. The

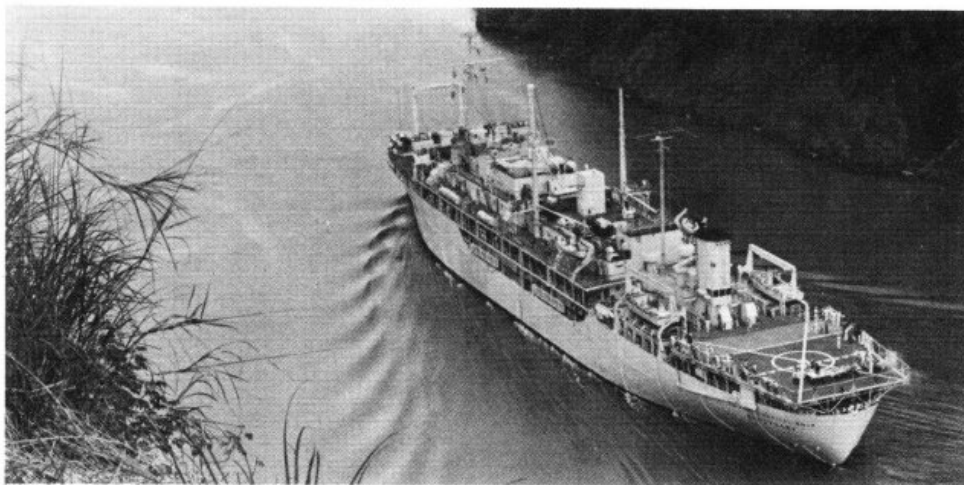
ship's holds were filled with food-stuffs, medical supplies, and other materials donated by the American people to the people of Colombia and Haiti. The naval hospital was staffed with doctors and nurses temporarily assigned for the duration of the Handclasp cruise.

The ship arrived in Buenaventura, Colombia on 12 October and remained there until 6 November 1973. As part of the medical mission, the ship's doctors, nurses and other medical personnel worked with local counterparts in the care of indigent patients as well as in several cross-training programs. During the cruise, the hospital cared for 123 inpatients, 5,663 outpatients and more than 2,000 dental patients. The staff performed nearly 200 surgeries and accomplished more than 10,000 ancillary tests and procedures.

Sanctuary delivered to 97 organizations in the two host countries about \$500,000 worth of donated materials which included food products, diapers, toys, athletic equipment and books. The naval hospital also supervised the distribution of 24 hospital beds, 38 phase II field hospital kits and 80 barrels of assorted medical supplies.

The thirteen-man Seabee team from NMCB5, Okinawa, provided assistance in the form of many civic action work projects.

After completing her mission in Port-au-Prince, *Sanctuary* set sail for her new homeport of Mayport, Florida where she arrived on 14 December 1973 to wait for her next mission. On 13 January 1975, *Sanctuary* sailed on her last voyage to Philadelphia Naval Shipyard for inactivation.



Program

ARRIVAL OF OFFICIAL PARTY

INVOCATION

Captain L. S. Darkowski, CHC, USN

GUEST SPEAKER

Captain Thomas A. Rodgers, USN

REMARKS AND READING OF ORDERS

Commander Gus C. A. Laskaris, USN

Commanding Officer, USS Sanctuary

NATIONAL ANTHEM

Lowering of Colors

ACCEPTANCE INTO INACTIVE FLEET

Commander John P. Derr, USN

Commanding Officer

Inactive Ship Maintenance Facility, Philadelphia

SECURE THE WATCH

BENEDICTION

Lieutenant Commander Thomas F. Johnson, CHC, USN

DISMISS THE CREW

FRIDAY, 28 MARCH 1975

PLAN OF THE DAY

DUTY SECTION #3

SUNRISE: 0652

SUNSET: 1919

CDO: MMC ADKINS

HANDS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE KNOWLEDGE AND CONTENT OF THIS PUBLICATION

WATCH BILL

QD POOW: BT2 MALONE

QD MESS: FA DENEHY

NOTICES:

1. Schedule of events for decommissioning ceremony.

0915 - Muster and Inspection of side boys with BM2 CHESHIRE;
Set ceremonial Quarterdeck Watch

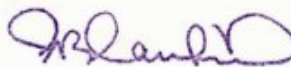
0930 - Crew Musters, Fall in on Helo Deck for Decommissioning Ceremony

0950 - Arrival of Official Guests

1000 - Commence Ceremony

1030 - Conclude Ceremony. Official Party Departs Followed by Guests.
Ship's Company Dismissed.

Note: Personnel in ranks will not salute during the playing
of the National anthem.



S. B. CANFIELD
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

2. Crewmembers living in Barracks 104 should plan to be completely packed prior to the Decommissioning Ceremony. All linens should be turned in to the Duty MAA prior to quarters. Personnel living in the barracks are to bear a hand in sweeping these spaces and taking out all trash from the fourth deck before 0930. The fourth deck will be kept locked during the ceremony to prevent theft.