



During SIERRA's 1990-91 Mediterranean Deployment, she claimed another spot in the Navy's history. Here she completes the first ever underway Intermediate Maintenance Availability on USS Paul.

to the Mediterranean five times, with one deployment to the Indian Ocean.

SIERRA's last Mediterranean deployment as the forward deployed tender to the 6th Fleet was from December 1991 to June 1992. For six months, SIERRA provided maintenance support to Mediterranean logistics, amphibious, combatant ships, and submarines. Groups of personnel, appropriately called members of a "fly-away" team, routinely departed on a moment's notice to assist forces throughout the Mediterranean, Red Sea, and Persian Gulf areas. Highlights of the cruise included extensive repair support to the 6th Fleet flagship. SIERRA also saved the Navy over one-million dollars in dry-docking costs, by performing the first-ever underwater repairs to a masker belt and propeller blades which allowed a destroyer to continue her operations.

On 24 August 1992, Hurricane Andrew tore through Southern Florida. Within 36 hours of receiving notice, SIERRA's helping hands were enroute to assist in rebuilding the devastated communities in South Florida. In less than one month, SIERRA restored 12 schools, erected a tent city, provided Federal Emergency Management Agency caseworkers, supplemented Navy Relief volunteers, provided Spanish linguists to U.S. Army medical units, and prepared tens of thousands of meals for relief workers, fire

fighters, and police officers. The crew also conducted debris removal from local parks and cleanup of public day care centers. SIERRA was the first Navy ship to arrive in Miami and the last to depart.

In early 1993, SIERRA began preparing for what was to be her last Mediterranean deployment. Those orders were changed, however, when it was learned that SIERRA would be decommissioned sooner than expected. On July 6, 1993, she commenced inactivation standdown.

On September 3, 1993, SIERRA's commanding officer, Captain Franklin T. Dunn, received the traditional "Don't Tread on Me" flag from the decommissioned submarine tender USS ORION (AS 18). Since 1977, the "Don't Tread on Me" flag has flown from the jackstaff of the oldest ship in active service. The flag, displaying 13 red and white stripes and a blue snake in its center, replaced SIERRA's traditional U.S. Navy jack at 1500, September 3, 1993, coincident with USS ORION's decommissioning in Norfolk, Virginia.

SIERRA will fly the flag until its decommissioning



September 1992 found the 48-year old destroyer tender deployed to Southern Florida for Hurricane Andrew disaster relief.

when Captain Dunn passes the flag to SIERRA's sister Dixie Class destroyer tender, USS YOSEMITE (AD 19), homeported in Mayport, Florida.

Although the oldest active ship afloat, SIERRA is not the oldest ship in commission. This honor is held by the continental frigate USS CONSTITUTION, faithfully known as "Old Ironsides", commissioned in 1797.

After decommissioning, SIERRA will be towed to the Navy Inactive Ship Maintenance Facility at Portsmouth, Va., for disposition.

The "Don't Tread On Me" flag replaces SIERRA's traditional Jack on the jackstaff, September 3, 1993.



Representatives of the crew are present for the raising of the "Don't Tread On Me" flag, signifying the Navy's oldest active ship in service.