



**Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet
USS Anchorage Commissioning
Anchorage, Alaska
Admiral Cecil D. Haney
04 May 2013
As Prepared for Delivery**

Thank you Vice Admiral Mark Skinner for that introduction and for being here for this important event.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, family and friends, thank you for your support for this special occasion. It is great to see so many in attendance today, each connected in some special way to this magnificent warship.

Annette Conway, thank you for the energy you provide in carrying out your unique role as this ship's sponsor and for the special relationship you have already developed with her crew. We are grateful for your participation in not only bringing this ship to life and imparting your tremendous spirit into her, but also for your tremendous support of our military service members at large and their families for so many years.

It is also great that you were able to bring your husband, the former Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Conway, and our Matrons of Honor - Samantha Moore, Carolyn Conway and Tara Conway. I appreciate the commitment and sacrifices that the Conway family has made to our Nation and to the United States Marine Corps. You are truly a remarkable family.

To Captain Joel Stewart and the Sailors of our Navy's newest ship, USS *Anchorage*, it is so great to see each of you again. Last time was at the Avondale shipyard, near New Orleans when I toured the ship. That was a hot muggy July day and the temperature soared over 90 degrees. It's a little cooler here in Alaska. For a guy who just left Hawaii it is quite a change in climate. There we usually put a jacket on if it drops below 70, so please forgive me if my teeth start chattering. But I am thrilled to be here and I'm deeply honored to commission a United States Navy warship named after such a wonderful city, representing great people and a rich, vibrant culture.

I want to thank the political leadership here today representing the State of Alaska, the City of Anchorage and all those on the commissioning committee who have made this day such a success. While I could acknowledge many, I will just name a few: Governor Parnell, Senator Murkowski, Senator Begich, Representative Young, Mayor Sullivan, former Secretary of the Navy Mr. Winter, and Ms. Shannon Jones, the chairwoman for the commissioning

committee. I thank you and the many others for preserving our democracy and getting us here today for this ship's commissioning.

It has been nearly 10 years since a Navy ship named *Anchorage* has sailed the seas, way too long, and I am excited to get this ship operational. We need her capabilities here in the Pacific to address a range of military operations, given her unique capabilities.

Let me briefly acknowledge the first ship named USS *Anchorage*, LSD-36. She had a storied career, having served during Vietnam, Somalia, and operations Desert Storm, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. She was the most highly decorated dock landing ship on the West Coast.

We have members of her crew here today, including several plank-owners, those who were part of her commissioning crew in March 1969 - 44 years ago. Isn't it great to have here on this platform Senior Plank-owner – Commander (Ret) Bob Raymon? Thank you and the other LSD-36 plank-owners for being here and for your service to our country. There is a special bond between shipmates that lasts forever. I am always inspired when I see the reunion between shipmates who share a common past and experiences.

We also have two active duty members of LSD-36's decommissioning crew who are also serving with the precommissioning crew for this ship. Senior Chief Jacinto Ganac and Petty Officer 1st Class Jupiter Bongolan. Having served on both ships is truly something to be proud of. Each of you bridging the gap between the achievements of the past and the triumphs of the future. Thank you for your continued commitment.

All of you who served on the first USS *Anchorage* have helped establish an outstanding reputation that is worthy of her great name. I know that this new ship will carry on that proud legacy as she represents the city, the people and the culture of Anchorage, wherever she may sail.

This ship was born by the labor of thousands of engineers, program and project managers, welders, electricians, and craftsmen of all types. Great Americans who put their heart and soul into the creation of a warship that will sail the seas, advancing America's interests in areas of consequence around the globe. For those men and women who belong to or support our Nation's critical shipbuilding industry and who helped build this warship, I thank you for what you have given our Nation and our Naval Forces.

For those of you who have worked throughout her acceptance trials, who took custody and who have prepared her to be commissioned today, you have done a remarkable job. Captain Brian Quin, I am glad to have you with us here. I know what a significant role you also played in

leading this ship through the commissioning stage. Thank you, and your wife Melody, for your leadership.

To the Sailors who are part of today's commissioning crew, I know you have waited a long time for this event. As plank-owners, you are the most important crew this ship will ever have. You set the course she will follow for years to come. Remember, you are establishing her reputation every day. I know I can count on each of you to set your standards high and live by the ship's motto, "Leave nothing to chance."

When USS *Anchorage* sets sail and cuts through the seas for the first time as America's newest USS warship, she will start a journey that will last more than four decades. Isn't it humbling to think that most of the Sailors and Marines that will see her sunset, have not yet been born?

Today, we live in an uncertain world, where conflict and crisis can arise at any time. We must always be prepared for surprise and if we are surprised, we must be ready to respond accordingly. USS *Anchorage* is a Naval fighting ship that will deliver credible combat capability in conflict or lend a hand for humanitarian relief when required. Throughout her journey, she will provide important amphibious capability when and where it is needed. I know her crew will put warfighting first and they will work hard to be ready.

We are a maritime Nation that relies on our Navy and Marine Corps team to operate forward together. This same winning team has sailed the seas together since the birth of our Nation. We sailed together when we entered the Pacific in the 1850s and we fought, bled and sacrificed together during the Pacific campaign of World War II. Since then we have maintained a near continuous presence in the Pacific.

Our Naval team will continue to ensure stability and security at sea while fostering peace and prosperity ashore. This ship will play a key role in maintaining our Naval presence forward in the coming decades as we assure our allies, partners and friends of our continued commitment.

Our Naval Forces have a lot to do as we rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region and these San Antonio Class warships, like USS *Anchorage*, will play an important role. These ships are in high demand and we need more of them.

USS *Anchorage*, LPD-23, is about to enter service in the Pacific with her sister ships, the USS *San Diego*, *Green Bay* and *New Orleans*, and I can't wait!

Before I conclude, I want to leave you with a quote from a respected former Commandant of the Marine Corps. He said: "I believe that our Nation needs fast, austere, and lethal expeditionary Naval forces that can execute missions across the spectrum of conflict. The Navy-Marine Corps

team is that key.” I could not agree more and I couldn’t have said it better. Thank you General Conway for that quote.

So let’s shift rudder, let’s end this speech and proceed with the commissioning. The captain and crew have readied the ship for service. It is time to break the colors, set the watch, man the ship, and report for duty. This is a proud day for our Nation, our Navy and for all of us here today. May God Bless you and keep you, and always watch over this great ship, and the Sailors and Marines that give her life!