

Lonely Pickets Carve Colorful 13-Year History; Will Take on New Role in National Defense

The final chapter of a long and colorful history was written recently with the disestablishment of the Newport-based Escort Squadron Sixteen during ceremonies on board the radar picket destroyer escort *Mills*.

Rear Admiral J. Nevin Shaffer, Commander Cruiser-Destroyer Flotilla Two and principal speaker at the ceremony told guests, "As the ships of Escort Squadron Sixteen go their separate ways, to the Pacific and to the south, they will leave behind a contribution and an example that will be long remembered and appreciated."

"Performing their jobs without fanfare, these ships and their officers and men have justly earned the admiration of their colleagues in the Cruiser-Destroyer Force. They have truly shown can-do spirit, dedication and performance in the finest tradition of the naval service."

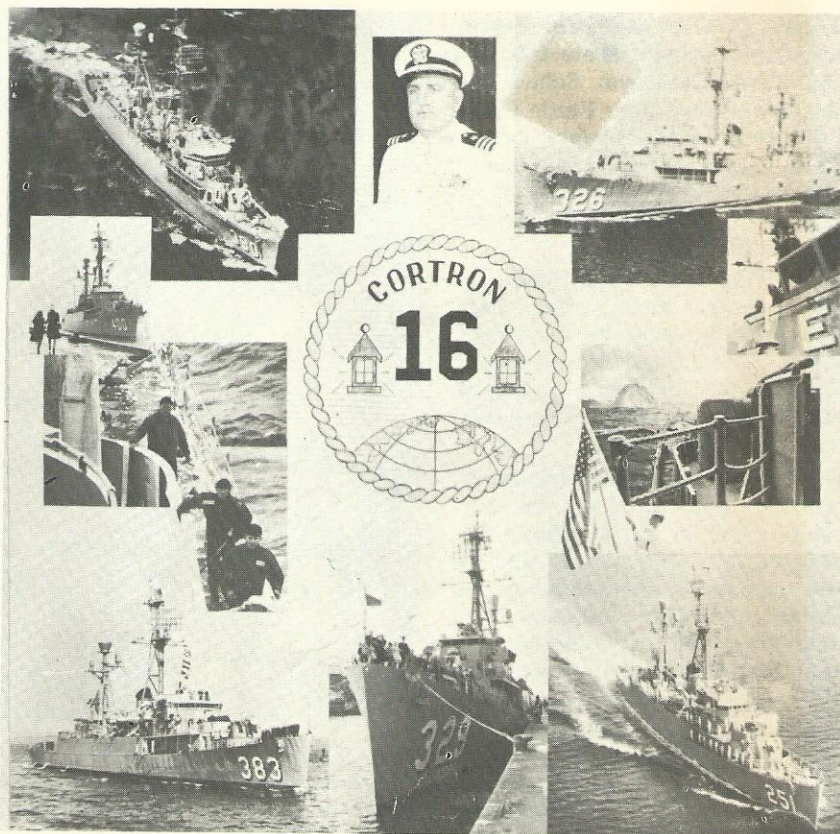
The primary mission of Escort Squadron Sixteen was of a special nature - to extend to seaward the radar coverage and weapons directing capability of the North American Defense (NORAD) system to assist in the defense of the United States.

The squadron's operational force originally consisted of six radar picket destroyer escorts with equipment designed for anti-submarine warfare, escort duties, screening and air defense.

In the last 13 years, ships of the squadron have steamed nearly three million miles. For 10 of these years, squadron ships patrolled lonely picket stations on the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom surveillance barrier and seaward extension of the Distant Early Warning System.

During the past three years they have provided similar protective radar coverage at the southern tip of the United States off Key West, Fla. Manned radar sites have now assumed this responsibility.

Ships of the squadron have provided support for our forces in



CORTRON SIXTEEN OPERATIONS IN BRIEF-Former Commander of Escort Squadron 16, Cmdr. Royal Y. Daniel, Jr., is flanked by the ships that composed the squadron. Clockwise they are: Thomas J. Gary (DER 326), Camp (DER 251), Kretchmer (DER 329), Mills (DER 383), Hissem (DER 400), and Calcaterra (DER 390).

the Antarctic during Operation Deepfreeze during the past two years.

The versatility and long range of radar picket destroyer escorts are the major reasons ships of the squadron have been reassigned to new and equally challenging missions. Three ships in the squadron, *Hissem*, *Camp* and *Kretchmer*, have been reassigned to the Pacific Fleet because of the current level of operations there. Of the remaining three ships, *Calcaterra* and *Thomas J. Gary* will soon deploy for Operation Deepfreeze in the Antarctic Ocean, and *Mills* will assume duties with Destroyer Division 601.