Navy Tows JFK from Norfolk to Philadelphia for Storage

NORFOLK, Va. – The decommissioned aircraft carrier ex-John F. Kennedy (CV 67) departed Norfolk Naval Station, Va., March 17 and is currently in tow to the Navy’s Inactive Ship Maintenance Facility in Philadelphia. The ship is scheduled to arrive at the Navy’s facility on March 20 for preservation and safe storage until a decision is made by the Secretary of the Navy on the carrier’s final disposition.

A contracted tug boat will tow the carrier up the East Coast to Philadelphia via the Delaware River. The Navy is working closely with the Coast Guard and maritime authorities to ensure that the carrier is towed in a safe manner that protects both the ship and other maritime traffic.

The public may view the carrier’s journey up the Delaware River from many locations along the river in Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey. These include Gov. Printz Park in Essington, Pa.; Fox Point State Park in Wilmington, Del.; Ft. DuPont State Park, Del.; New Castle Battery Park in New Castle, Del.; Delaware City State Park, Del.; Red Bank Battlefield, Red Bank, N.J.; other public parks between Cape May and National Park, N.J.

The ship was originally scheduled to be towed to Philadelphia in August 2007, but was instead towed to Norfolk while the Navy dredged in the vicinity of Pier 4 to further increase the safety of the ship mooring process and the surrounding waterway. Due to safety and security concerns, the carrier will not be open for tours while in storage in Philadelphia.

Ex-John F. Kennedy is currently in the Navy’s inactive inventory, meaning the ship has been taken out of commission and laid up for safe storage pending a future SECNAV decision regarding the ultimate disposition of the ship. As required by the FY07 National Defense Authorization Act, the Navy will maintain the ship in a state of preservation that would allow for reactivation in the event the carrier is needed in response to a national emergency. The ship’s historical items have been removed and transferred to the Curator of the Navy for preservation and storage.

Named in honor of the 35th President of the United States, ex-John F. Kennedy’s keel was laid in 1964 at Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company in Newport News, Va. In 1967, nine-year-old Caroline Kennedy, daughter of the late president, christened the ship. “Big John,” as the ship would become known, was commissioned in September 1968.
News Release

A veteran of 18 deployments to the Mediterranean Sea and Middle East, ex-John F. Kennedy amassed more than 260,000 arrested landings on her flight deck while operating virtually every tactical aircraft in the Navy’s arsenal. In 1989 two of the embarked air wing’s F-14 Tomcats shot down two Libyan MIG-23s that were approaching the battle group in a hostile manner. The carrier also participated in numerous other campaigns including Operations Desert Storm, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, and was sortied following the 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center.

Homeported at Naval Station Mayport since 1995, ex-John F. Kennedy most recently served as a training platform for naval aviators to obtain their carrier landing qualifications. Her final port call was to Boston in March 2007.

The ship measures over 1,050 feet long, displaces 82,000 tons and could carry 70 combat aircraft – the full complement of today’s carrier air wing. The crew consisted of more than 4,600 personnel when including the air wing. Ex-John F. Kennedy was one of the two remaining fossil-fueled aircraft carriers in the U.S. Navy.

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