

# KITTY HAWK (CV-63)

**Final Determination: 30 November 2010**

The Second Ship of the Fleet to Carry the Name  
Design: SCB Number 127  
Built By: New York Shipbuilding Corporation, Camden, NJ  
Keel Laid: 27 December 1956  
Launched: 21 May 1960  
Commissioned: 29 April 1961  
Decommissioned: Scheduled for FY-09

A history of the KITTY HAWK (CV-63) through 2005 can be found in the online version of the *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships* [http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/k4/kitty\\_hawk-ii.html](http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/k4/kitty_hawk-ii.html). The history was written and updated by Mr. Mark Evans, Historian in the Naval Historical Center's Naval Warfare Division (now the History and Archives Division of the Naval History and Heritage Command).

## **Deployments (Up to the year 2006):**

Western Pacific: 25 (Deployments included action off Vietnam, the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Gulf)

1987: CV-62 completed a global circumnavigation.

## **Awards (Up to the year 2006):**

**Presidential Unit Citation: 1 (23 December 1967 – 1 June 1968)**

Navy Unit Commendation: 6

Meritorious Unit Commendation: 6

Joint Meritorious Unit Commendation: 1 (Awarded to all units of her battle group)

CNO Letter of Commendation: 1

Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal: 12

Navy Expeditionary Service Medal: 4

Navy Battle Efficiency Award: 2

Humanitarian Service Medal: 3

Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation Gallantry: 40

Vietnam Service Medal: 31

Southwest Asia Service Medal: 1

## **Noteworthy Accomplishments / Events:**

1963: Conducted experiments to determine carrier suitability of U2 aircraft.

1969: Awarded Presidential Unit Citation for action off Vietnam during the Tet Offensive.

1972: Racially motivated disturbances broke out on ship injuring between 47 – 60 men. The UPWARD (Understanding Personal Worth and Racial Dignity) Program established as a response.

1984: Ship collided with surfacing Soviet submarine in the Tsushima Strait. The submarine believed to be VICTOR I class K-314 damaged. A small piece of the submarine's propeller embedded in the CV-63 hull recovered and made into a souvenir. Now part of the Naval Historical Center collection.

1992: Supported Operation Restore Hope off Somalia

1998: Relived CV-62 as the forward deployed carrier in Yokosuka, Japan. With the decommissioning of the CV-62, she became the oldest active duty ship in the USN and assumed the honor of flying the First Navy Jack in lieu of the union jack.

2003: Participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom

2008: She is the last USN carrier with an oil fired steam plant. She is also the last USN carrier in service that was not built by Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Co.

### **Conclusion:**

KITTY HAWK (CV-63) is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. She has an outstanding combat history and won the Presidential Unit Citation. Her construction marked to first refinement of the basic Forrestal design and resulted in a better laid out elevator placement leading to more efficient flight deck operation. These refinements were built into the follow-on carriers. On the social front, the racial disturbances in 1972 initiated reforms in the Navy culture.

### **Sources:**

Evans, Mark L. *DANFS* Entry for USS KITTY HAWK (CV-63)  
[http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/k4/kitty\\_hawk-ii.html](http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/k4/kitty_hawk-ii.html) (2006)

Friedman, Norman. U.S. Aircraft Carriers An Illustrated Design History. Naval Institute Press, Annapolis 1983.

Grossnick, Roy. United States Naval Aviation 1910 – 1995. Naval Historical Center, Washington, D.C. 1996.

Polmar, Norman. The Naval Institute Guide to the Ships and Aircraft of the U.S. Fleet 15<sup>th</sup> ed. Naval Institute Press, Annapolis 1993.

Polmar, Norman. The Naval Institute Guide to the Ships and Aircraft of the U.S. Fleet 18<sup>th</sup> ed. Naval Institute Press, Annapolis 2005.

Command Histories and Command Operations Reports for CV-63 in the collections of the Naval Historical Center Naval Warfare Division, Ships' Histories Branch.

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION STAKEHOLDER COMMENT:**

Historic preservation stakeholder comments received are considered when preparing final determinations. The initial determination for this vessel was made available for comment by historic preservation stakeholders for 60 days. During that time, the Navy received one (1) written comment.