

RANGER (CV-61)

Final Determination: 30 November 2010

The Eighth Ship of the Fleet to carry the Name
Built By Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company
Keel Laid: 2 August 1954
Launched: 29 September 1956
Commissioned: 10 August 1957

A complete history of RANGER (CV-61) is currently not available in the *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*. Her available narrative in this publication ends in 1974. For the ship's last nineteen years of service, it was necessary to review her unpublished Command Operations Reports in the collections of the Naval Historical Center's Naval Warfare Division (ex-Ships' Histories Branch).

Deployments:

RANGER was the only unit of the CV-59 class to spend her entire career in the Pacific. She made a total of twenty-two Western Pacific deployments. She was an active participant of the Vietnam War and was the only west coast based carrier to deploy in support of Operation Desert Storm. Her last deployment in 1992 saw her deployed across the Indian Ocean in support of Operation Restore Hope off Somalia.

Awards:

Presidential Unit Citation: 0

Navy Unit Commendation: 3 (January – August 1966; November 1968 – May 1969;
January – February 1991)

Meritorious Unit Commendation: 5 (December 1967 – May 1968; October 1969 – May
1970; November 1970 – June 1971; May 1986 –
July 1988; July – August 1988)

Battle Efficiency Award: 3 (January – December 1987; January – December 1991;
January – December 1992)

Navy Expeditionary Service Medal: 1 (October 1980 – March 1981)

National Defense Service Medal: 2 (December 1960 – August 1974; January – March
1991)

Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal: 13 (June 1960; May 1963; September 1964;
October 1964; November 1964 – January 1965
January 1965 – March 1965; April 1965;

January – March 1968; March 1969; April 1969; January 1970; April 1970; December 1990)

Vietnam Service Medal: 25 (January – February 1966; February – March 1966; April – May 1966; May – July 1966; July – August 1966; December 1967; January 1968; March – April 1968; April – May 1968; January 1969; February – March 1969; April 1969; November – December 1969; December 1969 – January 1970; January – February 1970; February – March 1970; April – May 1970; November – December 1970; December 1970 – January 1971; February – March 1971; March – April 1971; April 1971 – May 1971; December 1972 – January 1973; January 1973; February 1973)

Southwest Asia Campaign Medal: 3 (January 1991; January – April 1991; September – December 1992)

Humanitarian Service Medal: 2 (May – June 1976; March 1981)

Sea Service Ribbon: 11 (August 1974 – January 1993)

Republic Of Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation: 25 [January 1966 (3 Awards); February 1966 (4 Awards); March 1966 (3 Awards); April 1966; December 1967; January 1968 (4 Awards); March 1968; March – April 1968; April 1968 (3 Awards); April – May 1968; January 1969; February – March 1969; April 1969]

Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal: 1

Saudi Arabia's Kuwait Liberation Medal: 1

Battle Stars: 13 (Vietnam)

Noteworthy Accomplishments / Events:

RANGER's noteworthy accomplishments center on her combat prowess.

Conclusion:

RANGER is not first of the class, nor has a president served in her. She does not have a Presidential Unit Citation. However, she has a very impressive combat history for Vietnam and the liberation of Kuwait in 1991.

Unlike her three sister ships and four cousins, RANGER never had a SLEP [Service Life Extension Program] overhaul. As the least modern of the lot, she retains more historic fabric of the basic FORRESTAL design. For instance, she still retains the massive sponsons that supported the original gun armament.

A strong case for RANGER being eligible for listing in the Register could be made in light of her combat record.

Sources:

USS RANGER (CV-61) Decommissioning Program Dated 10 July 1993

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 15th ed. Naval Institute Press, Annapolis 1993.

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

USS RANGER (CV-61) *DANFS* Entry. Unattributed
<http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/r2/ranger-x.htm>

Command Histories and Command Operations Reports for CV-61 in the collections of the History and Archives Division, Naval History and Heritage Command.

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 zero (0) written comments.