

CONSTELLATION (CV-64)

Final Determination: 30 November 2010

The Third Ship of the Fleet to carry the Name

Design: SCB Number 127A

Built By: New York Naval Shipyard

Keel Laid: 14 September 1957

Launched: 8 October 1960

Commissioned: 27 October 1961

Decommissioned: 7 August 2003

A complete history of the ship is not available at present in the *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*. Although the history available concludes with her 2003 decommissioning, it is not as comprehensive as those for other carriers.

Deployments:

Western Pacific: 21 (Includes tours in the Indian Ocean and Arabian Gulf)

Awards:

Presidential Unit Citation: 1 (1971 – 1972 Deployment)

Navy Unit Commendation: Multiple Awards

Meritorious Unit Commendation: Multiple Awards

Navy Battle Efficiency Award: Multiple Awards

Navy Expeditionary Service Medal: Multiple Awards

National Defense Service Medal: Multiple Awards

Armed Forces Expeditionary Service Medal: Multiple Awards

Vietnam Service Medal: Multiple Awards

Humanitarian Service Medal: Multiple Awards

Sea Service Deployment Ribbon: Multiple Awards

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross Meritorious Unit Citation Medal Multiple Awards

Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal: Multiple Awards

Navy Crosses awarded to LT Randall H. "Duke" Cunningham and LT(JG) William P. Driscoll of VF-96 flying from CONSTELLATION in 1972. They were the first Aces of the Vietnam War.

Noteworthy Accomplishments / Events:

1960: While CONSTELLATION was fitting out in New York Naval Shipyard, a major fire broke out killing 50 shipyard workers and 14 military people.

1964: With TICONDEROGA (CV-14), launches the first air strikes of the Vietnam War.

1972: Is awarded the Presidential Unit Citation and two officers of her embarked air wing are each awarded the Navy Cross becoming the first Aces of the Vietnam War.

2001: In the wake of 11 September *Al Qaeda* attack, her air wing is among the first to support Operation NOBLE EAGLE (defense of the homeland).

Conclusion:

CONSTELLATION (CV-64) is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Although her written history is not completed, she is credited with being awarded a Presidential Unit Citation. In addition two of the officers flying from her assigned air wing received Navy Crosses and became the first Aces of the Vietnam War.

Sources:

CONSTELLATION (CV-64) Decommissioning Program dated 7 August 2003

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.

CONSTELLATION (CV-64) *DANFS* Entry. Unattributed, 2003
<http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/c13/constellation-iii.htm>

Command Histories and Command Operations Reports for CONSTELLATION (CV-64) in the collections of the History and Archives Division, Naval History and Heritage Command, (formerly 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 zero (0) written comments.