



USS KITTY HAWK (CVA-63)
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AVIATION HISTORY UNIT

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From: Commanding Officer, USS KITTY HAWK (CVA-63)
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-05A5G)

Subj: Command History; annual submission of

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.8A. Subj: Command Histories; maintenance
and submission of

Encl: (1) Ship's History, USS KITTY HAWK (CVA-63)

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is forwarded for
action.



W. L. CURTIS, JR.

SHIP'S HISTORY
USS KITTY HAWK (CVA-63)

The keel of the attack aircraft carrier USS KITTY HAWK was laid December 27, 1956. Named in honor of the North Carolina town which is the site of man's earliest successful heavier-than-air flight, she was launched May 21, 1960 and commissioned April 29, 1961 at Philadelphia, Pa.

Following her fitting-out period, April 30 to July 14, 1961, she departed Philadelphia under the command of Captain William F. Bringle, USN. On July 24, KITTY HAWK arrived at Norfolk, Va.

KITTY HAWK left Norfolk in August for the Caribbean where she spent a month operating with her air group, NAS Miramar's Carrier Air Group ELEVEN. The operations were held near Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The middle of September KITTY HAWK left on a good-will cruise to South America.

With a brief stop in Trinidad for fueling, KITTY HAWK conducted extensive training exercises on the long cruise to Rio de Janeiro. Arriving in Rio Sept. 27, 1961, KITTY HAWK, accompanied by destroyers of the Brazilian Navy, put on an air power demonstration for Brazil's top military and governmental leaders. KITTY HAWK's performance reassured the Brazilian people of the friendship of their North American neighbors. More than twenty-five thousand people visited the ship, where dozens of events brought North and South Americans even closer together. The success of the visit was demonstrated by approximately one and a half million people who lined Copacabana and Leblon beaches October 1 to wave farewell and watch KITTY HAWK launch jet aircraft as she sailed out of the harbor.

A week later, October 8, 1961, KITTY HAWK rounded Cape Horn and officially became part of the Pacific Fleet.

During a stop at Valparaiso, Chile October 13, another air demonstration was conducted. Once again it resulted in more requests to visit the ship than could be granted.

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At Santiago, the capital city, Chileans stopped American sailors on the streets to take them home to family dinners. A group of 65 KITTY HAWK sailors volunteered their time, the entire length of the ship's stay, repairing and painting a small school building. A complimentary letter from the U.S. Ambassador to Chile was extended to Capt. Bringle and crewmembers via Admiral G.W. Anderson, Jr., Chief of Naval Operations. The amount of good-will generated by the visit is incalculable.

KITTY HAWK sailed for Lima, Peru October 16. On October 19 members of the Peruvian press flew aboard to watch aircraft operations and view the ship. October is bullfight month in Peru and on October 22 the bullfight was in honor of KITTY HAWK.

KITTY HAWK left Peru October 23, arriving at San Diego November 1 to a warm, homeport welcome. Open house was held November 5 to allow residents of the city to get a closer look at the carrier. Approximately twenty thousand visitors inspected the ship. This is the largest group ever to visit a West-Coast ship in a single day.

November 18 KITTY HAWK participated in a Fleet Readiness Exercise. She hosted the Chief of Naval Operations and many other high-ranking U.S. Navy officials, as well as several prominent officers from foreign lands.

November 21, 1961 the ship departed San Diego for post shakedown repairs in the San Francisco Naval Shipyard. On May 5, 1962 a change of command took place and Captain Walter L. Curtis Jr. became the second Commanding Officer of KITTY HAWK. The ship then returned to San Diego for refresher training and carrier landing qualification exercises.

With 75 NROTC Midshipmen aboard, KITTY HAWK departed San Diego June 25, this time for a MIDPAC cruise with extensive operations near the Hawaiian Islands. The ship returned to San Diego July 16 and began a series of exercises off the California coast. They included a ten-day weapons training cruise and a strike exercise as a unit of Commander FIRST Fleet's striking force. On September 1, the ship hosted over 2,000 guests on its second Dependents' Day Cruise.

KITTY HAWK left San Diego Sept. 13, 1962 on her first Western Pacific Cruise.