

1992



*UNITED STATES SHIP*  
***INDEPENDENCE CV-62***



# History of USS INDEPENDENCE

The first INDEPENDENCE was a continental sloop of 10 guns under the command of Capt. John Young.

The second ship bearing the name of INDEPENDENCE was a 74-gun vessel, launched in 1814. Until it was placed out of commission in 1912, the second INDY served as a flagship and a receiving ship.

INDEPENDENCE number three lived a short life as a member of the Naval Overseas Transportation Service. It was commissioned in 1912 and decommissioned in 1919.

The fourth INDEPENDENCE, one of the first aircraft carriers to be converted from a cruiser hull, was launched in 1942. The INDEPENDENCE then joined up with the ESSEX and YORKTOWN in a strike against the Japanese held Marcus Islands. Then on Nov. 20, 1943, the INDY was attacked by Japanese torpedo bombers and took three hits in the starboard side, of which only one torpedo exploded. The INDY then returned to Pearl Harbor for repairs and was again ready for action by July 1944.

Her first mission back in service was as a night carrier with a specially trained air group. Within a year's duration the INDEPENDENCE was assigned as one of the target ships in atomic tests at Bikini Island. Damaged but not sunk she was towed to Kwajalein and decommissioned in August 1946. In two years of war, the ship earned eight battle stars.

On Jan. 10, 1959, USS INDEPENDENCE (CVA-62) was commissioned at the Brooklyn, N.Y., Naval Shipyard. Officials presiding at the ceremony included the Honorable Thomas S. Gates, Secretary of Naval Operations.

Capt. Rhodam Y. McElroy read his orders and was the first commanding officer to assume command of the aircraft carrier INDEPENDENCE.

After ceremonies, congratulations came from countries throughout the world and from leaders of foreign nations. The most remembered of these congratulations was a telegram and gift, a silver coffee service, from the citizens of Independence, Iowa, population 4,865.

In 1962, INDEPENDENCE was ordered to the Cuban coastline by President John F. Kennedy as part of the naval blockade during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

In 1964, the ship broke almost all of its own aircraft operational records during a 217-day at-sea period that included over 100 days off the coast of Vietnam in the South China Sea. For her outstanding performance during the period INDEPENDENCE was awarded the Navy Unit Commendation.

Following a short yard period in 1966, INDEPENDENCE hosted the carrier suitability tests for the Navy's first vertical takeoff and landing aircraft.

In 1970, INDEPENDENCE was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation of her performance in Jordanian contingency operations. The ship hosted the change of command events for 2nd Fleet in August 1971, and a month later, crossed the Arctic circle, making each crewmember an official "Bluenose." INDY'S 150,000th arrested landing occurred in February 1972, shortly after the Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Elmo Zumwalt, visited the ship.

In 1973, President Richard M. Nixon delivered his annual Armed Forces Day address from INDEPENDENCE.

In 1977, after INDY's 12th Mediterranean deployment, she began a lengthy complex overhaul. The work lasted for nine months and cost over \$ 90 million.

The ship was awarded its first Navy Expeditionary Medal in 1980 for her performance in Iran/Afghanistan contingency operation. During that deployment, INDEPENDENCE made the first carrier south-to-north transit of the Suez Canal after the canal's reopening.

INDEPENDENCE made two more deployments, one to the Indian Ocean, and one to the Mediterranean. The Navy Expeditionary Medal was awarded to the ship in 1982 for its work with the multi-national peacekeeping force in Lebanon.

The year 1983 was the most exciting for the crew and her air wing. In Operation Urgent Fury, the ship participated in the assault of Grenada, and the combined INDY and USS JOHN F. KENNEDY carrier battle groups air strike against Syrian targets in Lebanon proved the ship ready to carry out its mission on short notice.

INDEPENDENCE's 20th anniversary year, 1984, began with one Mediterranean deployment and ended with another. The ship was awarded its third Navy Expeditionary Medal, and its second Navy Unit Commendation as the result of the year's work. The following year, INDEPENDENCE was rewarded for her consistent outstanding performance by earning her first Atlantic Fleet's "Battle Efficiency Award" for the 18 month competitive period.

In 1985, INDY entered Philadelphia Naval Shipyard to begin the Service Life Extension Program (SLEP). The program consists of three phases - fleet modernization, ship's life-enhancing alterations, and repair and replacement. The SLEP is truly a cross between new construction and comprehensive overhaul.

Having completed SLEP in June 1988, INDEPENDENCE changed homeports and coasts. She and her crew made the trip around the tip of South America and arrived at her new homeport of San Diego in October 1988.

In July 1990, INDEPENDENCE and her air wing, CVW-14, departed San Diego and steamed due west, which marked the ship's first Western Pacific/Indian Ocean deployment. While performing routine exercise in the Indian Ocean, INDY was called upon to deter Iraqi aggression on its neighboring Arab countries. INDEPENDENCE was called upon as the first aircraft carrier on scene in the Gulf Oman operation as part of a multi-national response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, code named "Operation Desert Shield."

On Oct. 2, 1990 INDEPENDENCE became the first carrier air craft since 1974 to enter the Persian Gulf. On station in the Persian Gulf/Gulf of Oman region for over 90 consecutive days, INDY earned the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal.

After her tour in the Indian Ocean, INDEPENDENCE arrived on Sept. 11, 1991, in Yokosuka, Japan, to relieve USS MIDWAY (CV-41), and become the Navy's only forward deployed aircraft carrier outside the United States.

Whether deployed in the Mediterranean, Atlantic, Pacific, Indian Oceans, or the Persian Gulf, INDEPENDENCE has always and will continue to defend her country and democracy worldwide representing the United States as "Freedom's Flagship."