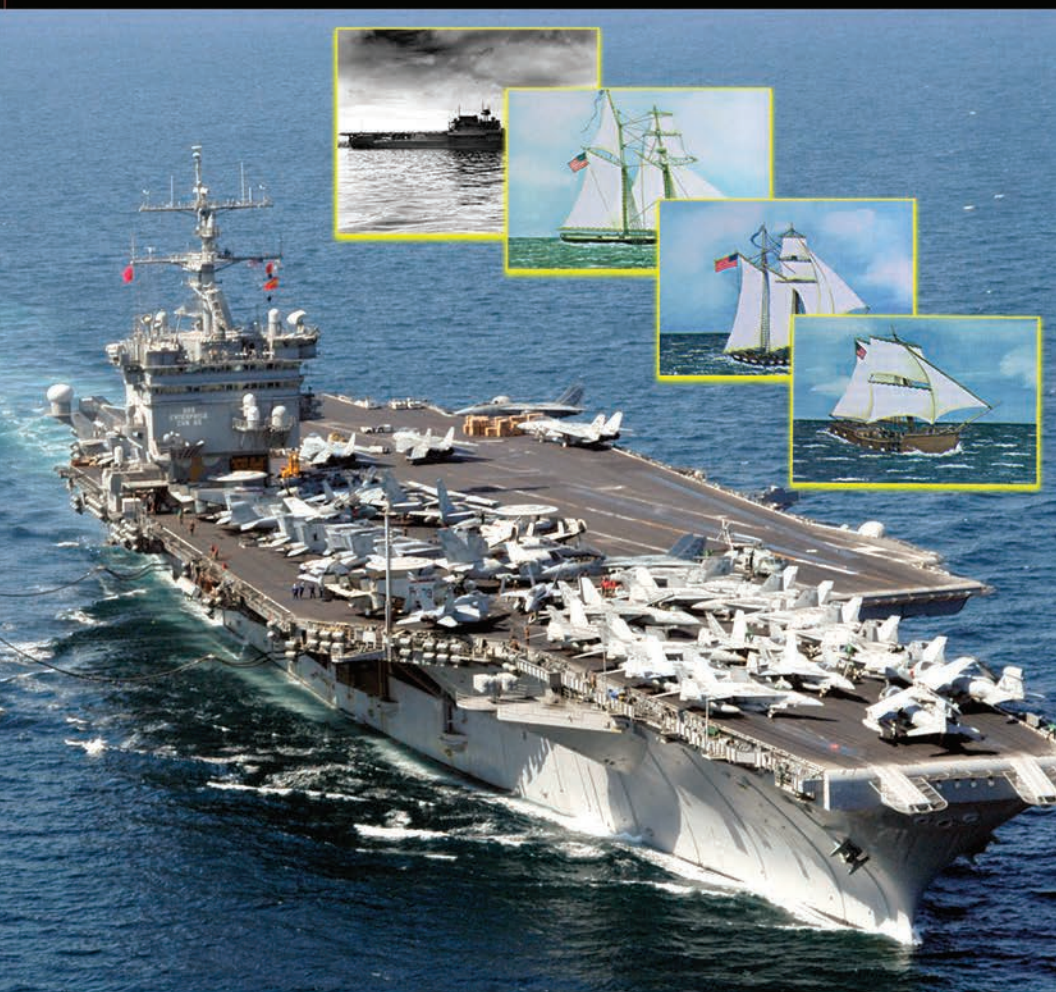


*U.S. Navy Ships Named*

# ENTERPRISE

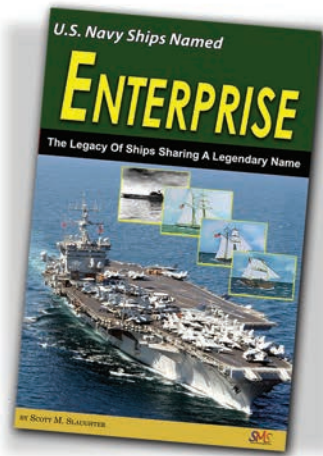
The Legacy Of Ships Sharing A Legendary Name



BY SCOTT M. SLAUGHTER

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Enterprise.*



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## INTRODUCTION

**F**or almost 250 years, American sailors and officers have sailed the proverbial Seven Seas on eight ships that proudly carried the name *Enterprise* in peace and in times of war starting in the days of the Continental Navy and the Revolutionary War.

*U.S. Navy Ships Named Enterprise* is about these great ships but also includes background information on the ninth ship to be named *Enterprise*, which will be the USS *Enterprise* (CVN-80) that is expected to be commissioned in 2025 and will carry the great naval tradition into the 22<sup>ND</sup> century.

## I ► CONTINENTAL NAVY (1775-1777)

- **Launched:** ..... N/A
- **Commissioned:** ..... May 10, 1775
- **Decommissioned:** ..... July 7, 1777
- **Class:** ..... 70-ton sloop
- **Fate/Status:** ..... Burned intentionally on July 7, 1777, to prevent capture by the British

**T**he Continental Navy had two ships named *Enterprise*, in its fleet. The first was originally a 70-ton British sloop-of-war named the HMS *Royal George* that the British used to supply their posts in Canada on Lake Champlain. (The “sloop-of-war” was Royal Navy classification but wasn’t the same as the single-masted sloop.)





The first USS *Enterprise* originally was a supply sloop used by the British on Lake Champlain to supply their posts in Canada.

Painting courtesy U.S. Navy

In May 1775, a small American force under the command of Colonel Benedict Arnold (yes, *that* Benedict Arnold) sailed up the Richelieu River for St. Johns (present day Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu) aboard the sloop *Liberty* that had only recently been commandeered by the Americans.

At 7:00 A.M. on May 18, Arnold and his 35 raiders somewhat easily captured the fort and shipyards at St. Johns easily and quickly and, more impressively, without any loss of life. Although capturing the fort and shipyards were important, perhaps a bigger prize was the capture of the HMS *George*, which Arnold soon renamed the *Enterprise* for the Continental Navy and which would play an important role for the Continental Navy on Lake Champlain.

Arnold also oversaw the refitting of the *Enterprise*, including arming it with 12 guns and ten swivel guns for use on Lake Champlain. Because the Continental Navy didn't have many experienced sailors, and particularly officers, Arnold assumed command of the *Enterprise*.

The American ships on Lake Champlain were at the time responsible for maintaining American control of the lake early in the Revolutionary War and the *Enterprise* was initially the most important warship in the Lake Champlain fleet, which was evident when she was occasionally designated the flagship for Colonel Arnold.

Her role on Lake Champlain was an important responsibility for the *Enterprise* because controlling Lake Champlain, and the adjoining Hudson River, would prevent the British from cutting off vital supply routes between New England and the colonies to the south. Another reason to control the Lake Champlain area, and the Hudson River in particular, was to prevent British troops from attacking and raiding Albany.

The *Enterprise* was joined by several other ships, as well as more than 1,000 troops, to be part of an expedition against St. Johns, Montreal, and Quebec on August 28, 1775. Even though the American forces captured St. Johns and Montreal, and Quebec was besieged, they were forced to withdraw from Canada after much stronger British reinforcements arrived. The *Enterprise* and the other U.S. ships sailed to Île aux Noix in the Richelieu River, where they waited while Arnold directed the building of a fleet at Fort Ticonderoga and Skenesboro (present-day Whitehall).

The Battle of Valcour Island began on October 11, 1776, at Valcour Island, near Plattsburg, New York. Arnold's fleet fought a valiant and effective action against the British ships throughout the day but the more powerful British ships overwhelmed the American ships to the point that by evening, much of Arnold's fleet was either sunk or damaged. The *Enterprise*, however, wasn't damaged, at least not severely, and Arnold managed to move it and the remaining four ships undetected past the British fleet by the following morning in the direction of Fort Crown Point before they sailed to Ticonderoga.



This image shows the American Colonial Navy galley *Congress* with sloop-of-war *Enterprise* during the Battle of Valcour Island on Lake Champlain, New York, October 11-13, 1776.

Courtesy Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships / Navy History & Heritage Command

A silver lining eventually emerged from the American defeat at the Battle of Valcour Island. Arnold and his smaller, less powerful fleet had disrupted and interrupted the British plans to invade New York so much

the British weren't able to mount its invasion before the arrival of snow and cold winter arrived. It was almost a year before the British could proceed with their invasion plans.

This delay, however, gave the American military time to recruit and train more troops. American forces, which were under the command of General Horatio Gates, defeated the British decisively at Saratoga, New York, on October 17, 1777. Gates' victory was critical in helping convince the French to help the Americans in the Revolutionary War, which would include the powerful French Navy and its experienced sailors and commanders.

The *Enterprise*, however, wasn't around for the Battle of Saratoga. The sloop had been run aground on July 7, 1777 during the evacuation of Ticonderoga and was burned to prevent its capture. The *Enterprise* and the four remaining ships were assigned to duty convoying bateaux, which were small, flat-bottomed riverboats, in the evacuation of Ticonderoga during the British advance prior to the Battle of Saratoga. However, the small American force of five ships was, as was the case at the Battle of Valcour Island, no match for the British fleet on Lake Champlain. The British captured two American ships, but before they could capture the *Enterprise* and the other two ships, their respective crews intentionally ran their ships aground on July 7, 1777, and burned them before the British arrived.



## II ► CONTINENTAL NAVY (1776-1777)

- **Launched:** .....N/A
- **Commissioned:** .....June 1776
- **Decommissioned:** .....February 1777
- **Class:** .....25-ton schooner
- **Fate/Status:** .....Returned to the Maryland Council of Safety in 1777. This *Enterprise* wasn't assigned a USS prefix.

Naval historians know very little about the second *Enterprise* in the Continental Navy, perhaps because it was in service for only a few months.

A committee in the Continental Congress — with the intriguing name of the Committee of Secret Correspondence — purchased a 25-ton, eight-gun schooner for the Continental Navy on December 20, 1776, and eventually renamed it *Enterprise*. The schooner, with its 60-man crew, had been a successful privateer (letter-of-marque) prior to its service with the Continental Navy.

The problem in renaming this ship the *Enterprise* was the first *Enterprise* was already serving with the Continental Navy so this second *Enterprise* wasn't technically a commissioned ship and is therefore the only one of the nine U.S. Navy ships named *Enterprise* that doesn't include the USS prefix (United States Ship) as part of its name. Only commissioned ships of the U.S. Navy can be assigned the USS prefix. Although the U.S. Navy has assigned the USS prefix retroactively for ships that would've met the current rules for a commissioned ship, the rules still prohibited the second *Enterprise* from being a commissioned ship, even retroactively, because the first USS *Enterprise* was still in service.



Very little is known about the second *Enterprise* other than it began its service with the Continental Navy on December 20, 1776, with Captain Joseph Campbell in command.

Painting courtesy U.S. Navy

What is known about this *Enterprise* is that it began its service with the Continental Navy on December 20, 1776, with Captain Joseph Campbell in command. She operated primarily in Chesapeake Bay where she convoyed transports, performed reconnaissance missions, and prevented the British from using their barges and small boats to get supplies into, and out of, the coasts of Maryland and Virginia.

Very little, unfortunately, is also known about the fate of this *Enterprise* though it's likely she was returned to the Maryland Council of Safety in late February 1777.

### III ► USS *ENTERPRISE* (1799-1823)

- **Launched:** ..... 1799
- **Commissioned:** ..... December 17, 1799
- **Decommissioned:** ..... April 1811
- **Recommissioned:** ..... June 1809
- **Decommissioned:** ..... July 8, 1823
- **Class:** ..... 135-ton schooner
- **Fate/Status:** ..... Lost July 9, 1823

The third ship named *Enterprise* was the first USS *Enterprise* for the new United States Navy. She was under the command of Lieutenant John Shaw with a complement of about 70 officers and men. She was in service with the U.S. Navy from December 17, 1799, to July 9, 1823.

This USS *Enterprise* was originally a twelve-gun schooner built by Henry Spencer in Baltimore, Maryland, but was overhauled and rebuilt so many times it went from a twelve-gun schooner to a fourteen-gun topsail schooner, and eventually to a brig.



The first USS *Enterprise* for the new United States Navy, and the third ship named *Enterprise*, was a twelve-gun schooner. It was in service with the U.S. Navy from December 17, 1799, to July 9, 1823.

Painting courtesy U.S. Navy

The *Enterprise* departed the Delaware Capes for the Caribbean Sea on December 17, 1799, to protect United States merchantmen from the plundering and looting by French privateers during the Quasi-War with France. (The Quasi-War was an undeclared war fought almost entirely at sea between the United States and the French Republic from 1798 to 1800.)

The *Enterprise* captured eight privateers and liberated eleven American ships from French custody, achievements that virtually guaranteed she would be part of the new U.S. Navy after the Quasi-War ended (though some talk suggested she was to be put up for sale after the Quasi-War).

The *Enterprise* next sailed to the Mediterranean Sea, and reached Gibraltar on June 26, 1801, where it was to join other U.S. warships in writing a bright and enduring page in U.S. Navy history.

Lieutenant Andrew Sterett replaced Lieutenant Shaw after the Navy relieved Shaw as *Enterprise* commander due to ill health, The *Enterprise* was delayed for awhile as she awaited new masts but then departed Baltimore in

early May 1801 and sailed to the Mediterranean Sea. She reached Gibraltar on June 26, 1801, where she was to join other U.S. warships in the First Barbary War.

Anti-piracy operations at this time were a major responsibility for the U.S. Navy. American shipping vessels were frequently attacked in the Caribbean, and the Navy was tasked with fighting the pirates.

The crew of the *Enterprise* saw its first action in the First Barbary War on August 1, 1801, when she defeated the Tripolitan corsair pirate ship *Tripoli* just west of Malta. (Tripolitania or Tripolitana is a historic region and former province of Libya and is now part of Libya). The *Enterprise* was undamaged but the pirate ship was damaged quite severely after the fierce, one-sided battle. Because the *Enterprise* crew wasn't allowed to take prizes, it allowed the battered pirate ship to enter port.

The members of the U.S. Congress were so impressed with Lieutenant Sterrett's skill and leadership during this engagement that on February 3, 1802, they voted in favor of awarding a commemorative sword to Sterrett and awarding a month's pay to the others serving aboard the *Enterprise*.

The *Enterprise* returned to Baltimore from Gibraltar in early October 1801 with dispatches for the Secretary of the Navy. Lieutenant Sterrett was given a furlough and the crew discharged.

The *Enterprise* spent the next several months carrying despatches, convoying merchantmen, and patrolling the Mediterranean Sea before finally getting some more victories starting in early 1803. The *Enterprise* captured *Paulina*, which was a Tunisian ship under charter to the Bashaw of Tripoli, on January 17 and ran a 30-ton craft ashore on the coast of Tripoli on May 22. The *Enterprise* and other ships of the squadron cruised inshore for the next several weeks while bombarding the coast and sending landing parties to destroy enemy small craft.

The *Enterprise* joined the frigate *Constitution* on December 23, 1803, in capturing the Tripolitan ketch *Mastico*. The ketch, which was refitted and renamed *Intrepid*, was given to Lieutenant Stephen Decatur, Jr., who was the



This drawing, which was likely done by U.S. Navy Captain William Bainbridge Hoff, shows the schooner USS *Enterprise* about to capture the Tripolitan corsair *Tripoli* on August 1, 1801.

Courtesy U. S. Navy Archives

commanding officer of the *Enterprise*, for use in a daring expedition to burn the frigate *Philadelphia*, captured by the Tripolitans and anchored in the harbor of Tripoli. Decatur and his volunteer crew carried out their mission perfectly by destroying the frigate and depriving Tripoli of a powerful warship. The *Enterprise* continued to patrol the Barbary Coast until July 1804 when it joined the other ships of the squadron in general attacks on Tripoli during the succeeding several weeks.

The *Enterprise* spent the winter and early spring in Venice until it was virtually rebuilt by May 1805. She rejoined the squadron in July 1805 and resumed patrol and convoy duty. The *Enterprise* was attacked by a group of Spanish gunboats off Gibraltar on August 15, 1806, but the gunboats were driven off during a brief engagement.

The *Enterprise* continued these patrols until August 1807 when it returned to the United States in late 1807, and cruised coastal waters until June 1809. After a brief tour in the Mediterranean, the *Enterprise* sailed to New York where it was laid up for almost a year.

The *Enterprise* also spent time at the Washington Navy Yard for repairs after which it was recommissioned in April 1811. She then sailed for operations out of Savannah, Georgia, and Charleston, South Carolina. The *Enterprise* returned to Washington, D.C., on October 2 and was taken out of the water for extensive repairs and modifications. The *Enterprise* sailed again on May 20, 1812, though this time had been riggered as a brig. (A brig was a sailing vessel with two square-rigged masts.) The *Enterprise* was at sea when the United States declared war on Great Britain that started the War of 1812. The *Enterprise* cruised along the east coast during the first year of hostilities.

On September 1, 1812, *Enterprise* got underway in search for British privateers reported off the coast of Maine. On September 5, 1813, *Enterprise* pursued a schooner to the shore on Wood Island and then discovered what appeared to be a ship-of-war in the bay near Penequid Point on the coast of Maine. The *Enterprise* immediately gave chase until it met the British brig HBM *Boxer*.

The two ships opened fire on each other, and as they became involved in a close-combat battle, both that took the lives of both ships' commanding officers, both commanding officers, Lieutenant William Burrows of the *Enterprise*, and Captain Samuel Blyth of the *Boxer*, both well known and highly respected in their navies, were killed.



Another broadside was exchanged before *Enterprise* sailed ahead to cross the bow of the *Boxer* and kept up a deadly fire until the *Boxer* crew was forced to surrender. *Enterprise* captured *Boxer* and took her into nearby Portland, Maine. A funeral was held in Portland for Lieutenant William Burrows and Captain Samuel Blyth.

From 1815 to 1823, *Enterprise* suppressed smugglers, pirates and slavers until July 9, 1823, the ship became stranded and broke up on Little Curacao Island in the West Indies.

After undergoing repairs in Portland, *Enterprise* sailed with the brig *Rattlesnake* for the Caribbean. The two ships took three prizes before being forced to separate by a heavily armed ship in late February 1814. The *Enterprise* crew was forced to discard most of their guns so their ship could increase speed over its pursuer.

*Enterprise* served one more short tour in the Mediterranean (July-November 1815), then returned to the United States where it patrolled the northeastern seaboard until November 1817. She then sailed throughout the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, suppressing pirates, smugglers, and slaves, during which time the *Enterprise* took 13 prizes.

The long career of this *Enterprise* finally came to an end July 9, 1823, when the ship became stranded and broke up on Little Curaçao Island in the West Indies. Fortunately, none of the crew were injured or killed.

## IV ► USS *ENTERPRISE* (1831-1844)

- **Launched:** .....October 26, 1831
- **Commissioned:** .....December 15, 1831
- **Decommissioned:** .....June 24, 1844
- **Class:** .....197-ton schooner
- **Fate/Status:** .....Sold on October 28, 1844

The fourth *Enterprise* was an 83-foot long, 197-ton schooner that was built by the New York Navy Yard and launched on October 26, 1831. Lieutenant S. W. Downing was the commander of this *Enterprise* when it was commissioned on December 15, 1831. Her original complement was nine officers and 63 men and it was armed with ten guns (a combination of 24-pound guns and 9-pound guns).



The fourth *Enterprise* was an 83-foot long, 197-ton schooner that was launched by the New York Navy Yard on October 26, 1831. This *Enterprise* was commissioned December 15, 1831.

Painting courtesy U.S. Navy

This *Enterprise* protected U.S. shipping around the world for most of its operational life. The *Enterprise* sailed on January 12, 1832, for South America where the ship patrolled the Brazil Station guarding United States interests until April 1834. The *Enterprise* next returned to New York where it was repaired and refitted until July when it was sent again for Brazil.

The *Enterprise* joined sloop *Peacock* ten months later for a cruise to the Far East (specifically Africa, India, and the East Indies). Continuing eastward, *Enterprise* called at Honolulu, Hawaii, in September 1836, then proceeded to the west coast of Mexico, arriving at Mazatlan on October 28, 1836.

The *Enterprise* cruised the west coast of South America until March 1839 when it departed Valparaiso, Chile and sailed around Cape Horn before reaching Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. She then sailed north to Philadelphia where, on July 12, 1839, she was inactivated.

It wasn't long until the *Enterprise* was recommissioned, which occurred on November 29, 1839. She then sailed on March 16, 1840, from New York for South America and spent the next four years there protecting U.S. commerce until returning to the U.S. for the last time.

The *Enterprise* entered the Boston Navy Yard on June 20, 1844, and was decommissioned for the last time four days later. The ship was sold on October 28, 1844.

## V ► USS *ENTERPRISE* (1874-1909)

- Launched: ..... June 13, 1874
- Commissioned: ..... March, 16 1877
- Decommissioned: ..... May 9, 1880
- Recommissioned: ..... January 12, 1882
- Decommissioned: ..... 21 March 1886
- Recommissioned: ..... October 4, 1887
- Decommissioned: ..... May 20, 1890
- Recommissioned: ..... July 8, 1890
- Decommissioned: ..... October 1, 1909
- Class: ..... 615-ton barque screw sloop
- Fate/Status: ..... Sold on October 1, 1909 / Burned for salvage near Boston in 1910

The fifth *Enterprise* was a steam corvette with auxiliary sail power. Its hull was built of live oak in Portsmouth Naval Yard in Kittery, Maine, by private contractor John W. Griffith.



The fifth *Enterprise* was a steam corvette with auxiliary sail power. It was launched on June 13, 1874, and commissioned on March 16, 1877. The ship was 185-foot long and weighed 615 tons. It had a speed of about eleven knots

Painting courtesy U.S. Navy

She was launched on June 13, 1874, and commissioned on March 16, 1877, with Commander G. C. Remy in command with a complement of 20 officers and 164 men. The ship was 185-foot long and weighed 615 tons with a speed of 11.4 knots. Its original armament featured the following:

- One 11-inch moth bore
- Four 9-inch broadside guns
- One 60-pounder pivot
- One short Gatling gun

This *Enterprise* was decommissioned and recommissioned several times, she primarily surveyed oceans, littoral areas, and river founts around the world, including the Amazon and Madeira Rivers. For example, its first duty after fitting out at Norfolk, Virginia, involved surveying operations at the mouth of the Mississippi River. The ship returned briefly to Norfolk



in April 1878 before leaving in late May for another surveying mission but this time up the Amazon River and the Madeira River in South America. The *Enterprise* returned to New York when the surveying mission was completed.

When not on hydrographic survey cruises, she spent time sailing the waters of Europe, the Mediterranean and east coast of Africa. The ship joined other U.S. Navy ships in December 1878 sailing in European waters and calling at several ports in northern Europe and in the Mediterranean. The *Enterprise* returned to the Washington Navy Yard on May 9, 1880, only to be placed out of commission.

The *Enterprise* was recommissioned on January 12, 1882, and spent the remainder of 1882 cruising by the East Coast of the United States.

The *Enterprise* began a three-year long hydrographic survey on January 1, 1883, that took her completely around the world. (Hydrographic survey is the science of measuring and describing features that affect maritime navigation, marine construction, and related activities.) Its findings on this cruise greatly added to the knowledge of the ocean currents and ocean bottoms.

On March 21, 1886, the *Enterprise* was again decommissioned at New York, only to be put back in commission in early October 1887. *Enterprise* then sailed from Boston in January 1888 for a two year deployment to Europe, the Mediterranean and the east coast of Africa. She returned to New York in March 1890 and was decommissioned on May 20.

This period of decommissioning didn't last long because the *Enterprise* was recommissioned on July 8, 1890, and spent the next several months operating mostly in the Caribbean. The ship was next used from September 1891 to September 1892 as the platform on which cadets at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, trained and practiced.

The *Enterprise* was lent on October 17, 1892, to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for duty as a maritime school to help train cadets in Boston. It was her last role but she performed the role quite well for the next 17 years.

The fifth *Enterprise* was returned to the Navy in early May 1909 before being sold several months later on October 1, 1909. The hulk was burned for salvage near Boston in 1910.

## VI ► USS *ENTERPRISE* 1917-1919

- **Launched:** ..... 1917
- **Commissioned:** ..... Noncommissioned ship (placed in service on December 6, 1917)
- **Decommissioned:** ..... Noncommissioned ship (removed from service on August 2, 1919)
- **Class:** ..... 66-foot motor patrol boat
- **Fate/Status:** ..... Transferred to the Bureau of Fisheries on August 2, 1919, though ultimate fate unknown

Not all U.S. Navy ships with the honor of having the name *Enterprise* were large, ocean-going vessels. The USS *Enterprise* (SP-790), for example, was a motor patrol craft purchased by the U.S. Navy on December 6, 1916.



Not all U.S. Navy ships named *Enterprise* were large, ocean-going vessels. The USS *Enterprise* (SP-790), for example, was a motor patrol craft purchased by the U.S. Navy on December 6, 1916

Painting courtesy U.S. Navy

This 66-foot long *Enterprise* served in a noncommissioned status in the Second Naval District during World War I. Beginning on September 25, 1917, it performed harbor tug duties at Newport, Rhode Island, until December 11, 1917, when it moved to New Bedford, Massachusetts, for operations inside the breakwaters.

The sixth ship to be named *Enterprise* was transferred to the Bureau of Fisheries on August 2, 1919.

## VII ► USS *ENTERPRISE* CV-6 (1938 - 1960)

- **Launched:** ..... **October 3, 1936**
- **Commissioned:** ..... **May 12, 1938**
- **Decommissioned:** ..... **February 17, 1947**
- **Class:** ..... ***Yorktown*-class aircraft carrier**
- **Fate/Status:** ..... **Scrapped beginning in July 1958 through to May 1960**

The first aircraft carrier with the name USS *Enterprise* was the *Yorktown*-class aircraft carrier CV-6 that was commissioned on October 3, 1936, and served the U.S. Navy until February 17, 1947. It had an overall length of 827 feet and displaced more than 32,000 tons of water.

This *Enterprise* was the first of the ships named *Enterprise* to receive the nickname of “Big E” (although other nicknames included the Lucky E, the Grey Ghost and the Galloping Ghost, inspired by the Japanese announcing on at least three occasions that she’d been sunk in battle during the Pacific War.) She served with unparalleled distinction in World War II, becoming the most-decorated ship in U.S. Navy history.



This photograph shows the USS *Enterprise* (CV-6) making 20-knots during post-overhaul trials in Puget Sound, Washington, on September 13, 1945.

Courtesy U.S. National Archives

The 19,800-ton *Yorktown*-class USS *Enterprise* was commissioned in May 1938 and then made her shakedown cruise to South America before operating in the Caribbean. The *Enterprise* joined the Pacific fleet in April 1939. She was underway to conduct training and transport Marine Fighter Squadron 211 (VMF-211) to Wake Island in November 1941. She was returning to the Hawaiian island of Oahu on the morning of December 7, 1941, when her crew received news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

In many ways it turned out to be fortunate break for the United States that the *Enterprise* was at sea at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack. It didn't, however, take her long before she was in action. Because the *Enterprise* was involved in so many of the key Pacific theater battles of World War II, the "Big E" seemed to be everywhere during World War II.

Her aircraft sank a Japanese submarine on December 10, which was just three days after the Pearl Harbor attack. It would be just the first of many ships and aircraft that Japan would lose to the air group of the *Enterprise*. The *Enterprise* also participated in the abortive Wake Island relief expedition later in December.

In February 1942, after escorting convoys to the South Pacific, *Enterprise* attacked Japanese positions in the Marshall Islands. She was busy during the next few months taking part in raids on Wake Island and Marcus Island, participating in the Doolittle Raid on Japan and was en route to the South Pacific when the Battle of the Coral Sea began in early May 1942.

In June 1942, *Enterprise* played a vital role in the Battle of Midway, in which her aircraft sank or helped sink three Japanese aircraft carriers and a cruiser. She was next involved in the Guadalcanal Campaign, including the landings there in early August, the Battle of the Eastern Solomons later in that month and the Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands in October.

Japanese bombs in August and October badly damaged the *Enterprise*, which was a serious situation because the U.S. Navy didn't have another fleet carrier available in the area in November. The *Enterprise* was, despite her damaged condition, able to launch her air group against Japanese ships during the crucial Battle of Guadalcanal.

The *Enterprise* took three direct hits during the Battle of Guadalcanal that killed 74 crew members and wounded 95 others. By the end of the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal on November 15, aircraft from the *Enterprise* had shared in sinking 16 ships and damaging eight others.

The *Enterprise* also heroically took on the aircraft from the USS *Hornet* after that carrier was abandoned during the Battle of the Santa Cruz Island on October 26, 1942.

She remained in the Solomons area into the spring of 1943 and received the Presidential Unit Citation for her action there.

The *Enterprise* spent several months in 1943 being overhauled before she returned to the action in the Pacific. The *Enterprise* participated in the invasions of Gilbert Island and Marshall Island in late 1943 and early 1944 and in attacks on Japanese bases throughout the central and southern Pacific.

The "Big E" introduced carrier-based night fighter operations in the Pacific Theatre on November 26, 1943, when three aircraft from the carrier broke up a large group of land-based Japanese bombers attacking Task Group 50.2. Two of the three aircraft returned to the *Enterprise* but Lieutenant Commander Edward "Butch" O'Hare was lost. O'Hare was the first U.S. Navy pilot to be an ace in World War II as well as the first naval recipient of the Medal of Honor in World War II. (Orchard Depot Airport was renamed in his honor on September 19, 1949, as the O'Hare International Airport.)



The “Big E” took part in the Marianas operation and the Battle of the Philippine Sea in June and July. Her aircraft participated in more raids and again engaged enemy ships from August to December, and in particular during the Battle of Leyte Gulf in late October.

As the *Enterprise* sailed on December 24, 1945, for the Philippines and the Luzon campaign, she carried an air group specially trained in night carrier operations. Because the *Enterprise* was the only carrier capable of night operations, she left Oahu with her hull code changed from CV to CV(N), with the “N” signifying “Night.” In addition to the Luzon campaign, the “Big E” also participated in strikes in the South China Sea and provided day and night combat air patrol for Task Force 58 as it struck Tokyo on February 16–17. She next supported the U.S. Marines in the Battle of Iwo Jima from February 19 to March 9 where during one part of that period, *Enterprise* kept aircraft aloft continuously over Iwo Jima for an incredible 174 hours

She received bomb damage on March 13, 1945, and damage from a Kamikaze attack on April 11 but the damage was small enough for her to be repaired locally. She did receive more serious damage by another Kamikaze attack on May 14 that required her to return to the United States for repairs.

The “Big E” was damaged for the last time during the war on May 14, 1945, when a kamikaze aircraft struck the ship near her forward elevator, killing 14 and wounding 34 men.

The *Enterprise* repairs were finished in September 1945 but that was after the Japanese surrendered and World War II had ended. She helped return servicemen from the war zones and was present for the Fleet Review off New York City in October 1945.

The *Enterprise* earned 20 battle stars for her action in World War II, the most for any U.S. warship, regardless of size or role, in World War II. She was one of only three American aircraft carriers commissioned prior to World War II to survive the war (the other two were the USS *Saratoga* and the USS *Ranger*). In a show of great respect and admiration from an ally, the “Big E” was also presented with a British Admiralty Pennant which was hoisted when a majority of the Admiralty Board members were present. The *Enterprise* is the only ship not in the Royal Navy to receive the British Admiralty Pennant in the more than 400 years since its creation.

Although a gallant carrier with an unparalleled record during World War II, the *Enterprise* didn't have much of a career after the war. The *Enterprise* was inactive after early 1946 and decommissioned in February 1947. While decommissioned, she was redesignated CVA 6 in October 1952 and CVS 6 in August 1953.

Despite several attempts in the early 1950s to turn the carrier into a memorial, the USS *Enterprise*, the most decorated ship in U.S. Navy history, was sold for scrapping on July 1, 1958.

## VIII ► USS *ENTERPRISE* CVN-65 (1960-2013)

- **Launched:** ..... September 24, 1960
- **Commissioned:** ..... November 25, 1961
- **Decommissioned:** ..... February 3, 2017
- **Class:** ..... *Enterprise*-class nuclear-powered aircraft carrier
- **Fate/Status:** ..... Inactive since December 2012 and officially decommissioned on February 3, 2017.

The next ship to be called the USS *Enterprise* was CVN-65 and was the lead ship in the *Enterprise*-class of aircraft carriers. The Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company began construction on the USS *Enterprise* in 1958. The *Enterprise* was the world's first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier when she was launched on September 24, 1960. She was the eighth United States naval vessel to bear the name *Enterprise* when she was commissioned on November 25, 1961, and like her famous World War II-era predecessor, she was nicknamed the "Big E."

The "Big E" was an appropriate nickname, too, because at 1,123 feet, she was the longest naval vessel in the world. She began her shakedown cruise on January 12, 1962.

The *Enterprise* was originally planned as the lead carrier in the *Enterprise*-class aircraft carriers for the U.S. Navy. However, construction was halted when estimated costs increased dramatically and therefore work on the remaining carriers never started.



This photograph from November 11, 2003, shows the guided missile cruiser USS *Gettysburg* (top) and the combat support ship USS *Detroit* (middle), during a replenishment at sea with the USS *Enterprise* in the Arabian Sea.

Courtesy U.S. Navy - Photo by Photographer's Mate 2nd Class Douglas M. Pearlman

An eight-reactor propulsion design supplied the power to the *Enterprise*, which meant she was the only aircraft carrier to have more than two nuclear reactors. This was a daring undertaking because never before had two nuclear reactors been harnessed together. Therefore, when the engineers first started planning the propulsion system for the ship, they were uncertain how it would work, or even if it would work.

Keep in mind, too, that the designers didn't have access to the sophisticated computers we have today so there were no high-level CAD programs and other software to help them. She required more than 900 engineers and designers to create millions of blueprints necessary to build the ship. Someone once determined that if all the blueprints were laid end-to-end, they'd stretch about 2,400 miles, or from Miami to Los Angeles.

Each A2W reactor replaced one of the conventional boilers in earlier carrier constructions. She also was the only carrier with four rudders instead of two as used in the other classes. Another difference was she also featured a more cruiser-like hull.

The newly-christened *Enterprise* left the shipyard for six days of builder and Navy pre-acceptance trials. Its escort during the trials, was the U.S. Navy destroyer USS *Laffey*, which sent this message: **SUBJECT: SPEED TRAILS. 1. YOU WIN THE RACE. 2. OUR WET HATS ARE OFF TO AN AREA THOROUGHbred.** When the Big "E" returned to port, the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral George W. Anderson, Jr., stated enthusiastically, "I think we've hit the jackpot."

After years of planning and work by thousands the day finally arrived. At the commissioning of the *Enterprise*, Secretary of the Navy John B. Connally Jr. called it a worthy successor to the highly decorated USS *Enterprise* of World War II. "The fighting Gray Lady, as it was called, served in such well-known battles as the raid on Tokyo and the Battle of Midway. ... The new *Enterprise* will reign a long, long time as queen of the seas."

Although the *Enterprise* is inactive, she still remains a commissioned ship and therefore remains as the third oldest commissioned vessel in the United States Navy after the sailing vessel USS *Constitution* and the USS *Pueblo*, which is currently being held by North Korea but remains an actively commissioned US Navy ship.

The *Enterprise* played an early role in the United States space program when she was a tracking station on February 20, 1962, when Lieutenant Colonel John Glenn became the first American to orbit the Earth in his Friendship 7 Project Mercury space capsule.

The *Enterprise* was dispatched to its first international crisis in October 1962, during the Cuban Missile Crisis, during which President Kennedy ordered a naval blockade of all military equipment and supplies being shipped from the Soviet Union to Cuba. This was the closest the U.S. and USSR came to nuclear war. The *Enterprise* and other ships in the Second Fleet were involved in this naval blockade, which began two days later on October 24, and she was an important part of the naval and air blockade. The first Soviet ship was stopped the next day. On October 28, Soviet leader Krushchev agreed to dismantle nuclear missiles and bases in Cuba, ending the Cuban Missile Crisis, .

The *Enterprise* made her second and third deployments to the Mediterranean Sea from 1963 to 1964. She returned to Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company in October 1964 for her first refueling and overhaul.

The *Enterprise* was transferred to the Pacific Seventh Fleet in November 1965 to begin the first of six combat deployments to Southeast Asia from 1965 to 1975.

She was the first nuclear-powered ship to engage in combat action when her aircraft were launched to conduct airstrikes against the Viet Cong near Bien Hoa on December 2, 1965. *Enterprise* launched 125 sorties on the first day and her aircraft dropped bombs and fired rockets against the supply lines used by the Viet Cong.

Her pilots had flown more than 13,400 battle missions during 132 combat days of operations by the time the *Enterprise* left the Gulf of Tonkin on June 20, 1967. She had also steamed an impressive 67,630 miles in operations during this time with the Seventh Fleet. She arrived in Subic Bay on June 22 and departed a few days later to Alameda for a much needed overhaul.

A diplomatic crisis between the United States and North Korea began in January 1968 after a North Korean patrol boat captured the USS *Pueblo*. The *Enterprise* was ordered to operate near South Korean waters for almost a month in a show of power.

A serious accident aboard the *Enterprise* on January 14, 1969, killed twenty-seven crew members and injured hundreds more. A rocket attached to an F-4 Phantom parked on the flight deck somehow exploded and sent shrapnel and flames across the flight deck. The resulting fires and explosions destroyed fifteen aircraft. The damage to the *Enterprise* was so bad she had put in for repairs at Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard.

The repairs were completed by March 1, 1969, and the *Enterprise* proceeded on her scheduled WESTPAC deployment to Vietnam and the Tonkin Gulf. These destinations were, however, delayed by events unfolding in the East Japan Sea and the Korean Peninsula.

On April 14, 1969, the constantly tense conditions between the United States and North Korea worsened when North Korean Air Force MiG fighters shot down a U.S. EC-121 Warning Star aircraft that was on a reconnaissance patrol over the East Japan Sea. The thirty-one person crew on the EC-121 were all killed. The *Enterprise* arrived on station with Task Force 71 (TF 71) in late April and joined aircraft carriers *Ticonderoga*, *Ranger* and *Hornet*, several cruisers and destroyers to protect future such flights over the international waters the EC-121 was flying.

The *Enterprise* returned to Newport News Shipbuilding and went through an overhaul and her second refitting that lasted from 1969 to 1970. A part of the overhaul included newly designed nuclear reactor cores that



contained enough energy for ten more years of power. *Enterprise* left for Vietnam again in early 1971 to provide air support for American and South Vietnamese units.

By July 30, 1971, the *Enterprise* along with the aircraft carriers *Oriskany* and *Midway* launched more than 2,000 strike sorties into Vietnam despite disruptions by three typhoons during the month. These were mainly visual strikes against enemy troop positions and in support of U.S. helicopter operations. The *Enterprise* was in operations on Yankee Station from August to November 1971.

In October 1972, the U.S. ended tactical air sorties into North Vietnam north of the 20th parallel and ended Linebacker I operations hoping to promote peace negotiations being held in Paris. *Enterprise* and the other carriers had flown an impressive 23,652 tactical air attack sorties into North Vietnam from May to October.

The U.S. resumed bombing campaigns north of the 20th parallel beginning on December 18, 1972. Aircraft from the *Enterprise* conducted concentrated airstrikes against surface-to-air missile and anti-aircraft artillery sites, enemy army barracks and other strategic locations. Her aircraft were also used to reseed the mine fields in Haiphong Harbor.

In December 1972, the North Vietnamese returned to the peace table and the U.S. bombing raids ended. When the Vietnam cease fire was announced a few weeks later in January 1973, all U.S. Navy aircraft carriers ceased combat sorties into North and South Vietnam.

The cease-fire, however, didn't end all hostilities in the area because aircraft from *Enterprise* and *Ranger* flew eighty-one combat sorties on January 28, 1973, against lines-of-communication targets in Laos. The corridor for overflights was between Hu and Da Nang in South Vietnam. These combat support sorties were flown in support of the Laotian government, which had requested this assistance, and the action wasn't part of the cease-fire in Vietnam.

After the cease-fire in Vietnam in 1973, the *Enterprise* proceeded to the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Bremerton, WA, where the carrier was altered and refitted to support the new F-14 Tomcat aircraft. This work required that two of the four jet blast deflectors to be enlarged to accommodate the Tomcat. The F-14 Tomcats operated from the *Enterprise* from 1974 to 2001.

In July 1976 *Enterprise* began her eighth Western Pacific deployment and her ninth Western Pacific deployment began in 1978.

After two WESTPAC deployments in 1976 and 1978, the *Enterprise* went to the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in January 1979 for a comprehensive three-year overhaul.

The *Enterprise* completed several deployments from 1982 to January 1986 after the lengthy overhaul in 1979. When the *Enterprise* began her 13th deployment in February 1988, she escorted reflagged Kuwaiti oil tankers in the Persian Gulf as part of Operation Earnest Will.

In September 1989, *Enterprise* left Alameda and began her 14th overseas deployment. This deployment would be different from her earlier deployments because it was an around-the-world cruise that would end at the ship's new homeport of Naval Station Norfolk, VA, in April 1990.

She moved to Newport News Shipbuilding in October for refueling and the Navy's largest complex overhaul refit ever attempted. The Navy extended the carrier's length to 1,123 feet as well as other modifications to extend her service life.

The *Enterprise* began her 15th overseas deployment on June 28, 1996. The carrier enforced no-fly zones in Bosnia as part of Operation Joint Endeavor and over Iraq as part of Operation Southern Watch. The deployment ended in December 1996.

*Enterprise* departed on her 16th overseas deployment in November 1998 and relieved the USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* in the Persian Gulf. The *Enterprise* battlegroup spearheaded Operation Desert Fox in December 1998. Iraqi military targets were hit hard by aircraft from the *Enterprise* as well as the more than 300 Tomahawk cruise missiles launched from ships in the battlegroup.

In early March 1999, *Enterprise* returned to the Persian Gulf to relieve *Carl Vinson* in support of Operation Southern Watch before returning to Norfolk in May 1999.

*Enterprise* began her 17th overseas deployment on April 25, 2001, but as she was steaming home from the Persian Gulf, the September 11 terrorists attacks in New York City and Washington D.C., occurred. Even though her commander didn't have orders to do so, he had his carrier battle group return to the waters off Southwest Asia near the Persian Gulf just in case they were needed.

In direct support of Operation Enduring Freedom, "Big E" once again took its place in history by becoming one of the first units to respond in a crisis with its awesome striking power. Aircraft from the *Enterprise* flew

nearly 700 missions and dropped over 800,000 pounds of ordnance over Afghanistan during the first three weeks of the war. The *Enterprise* finally arrived at her home port of Norfolk, Virginia, on November 10, almost three weeks later than originally planned.

The *Enterprise* entered the Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Portsmouth, Virginia, in January 2002, for a scheduled one-year overhaul.

She next deployed again to the Middle East area from September 2003 to February 2004 to relieve the four carriers that were on station during the invasion of Iraq. *Enterprise's* role was to provide continued air support for Operation Iraqi Freedom. It also marked the final deployment for the F-14 Tomcat.

The *Enterprise* had another routine shipyard overhaul at Newport News Shipyard in 2005 before departing in May 2006 for a six-month deployment in support of both Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. She returned to Norfolk in mid-November 2006.

In April 2008, *Enterprise* entered the Northrop-Grumman Newport News shipyard for a scheduled 18-month overhaul. The anticipated date for the work to be completed was September 2009 but repair and maintenance costs began to increase dramatically as the work continued. There were also several delays in the expected completion date.

The U.S. Navy announced in April 2010 that the cost of refurbishing the *Enterprise* had risen to \$662,000,000— an increase of 46% over the original budget. One of the reasons for the increase maintenance cost was that the *Enterprise* was the oldest active combat ship in the U.S. Navy at the time. .

Meanwhile, Admiral Gary Roughead, Chief of Naval Operations, began in April 2009 to have Congressional approval to speed up the process of decommissioning the *Enterprise* from the scheduled 2014 to late 2012 or early 2013. This would, however, reduce the U.S. Navy to having only ten active aircraft carriers until the USS *Gerald R. Ford* became operational.

Congress agreed with Admiral Roughead's recommendation and in October 2009 approved the decommissioning of *Enterprise* in 2013 after 51 years of faithful service.

The *Enterprise* departed the Northrop Grumman shipyard on April 19, 2010. The Navy said it planned to use her for two six-month deployments before her scheduled 2013 decommissioning date.

The *Enterprise* embarked on its 21st deployment in January 2011, during which the carrier supported *Operation Enduring Freedom*, *Operation New Dawn*, and several anti-piracy missions. During its six-month tour of duty, “Big E” made port visits to Lisbon, Portugal, Marmaris, Turkey, the Kingdom of Bahrain, and Mallorca in Spain.

In February 2011 the *Enterprise* was involved in an incident with Somali pirates, an event that ended in the deaths of four American citizens and two pirates. She participated in operations that captured 75 Somali pirates during this deployment. Her strike group also launched missile strikes against the Libyan government.

The “Big E” became the fourth aircraft carrier in naval history to record 400,000 arrested landings on May 24, 2011. The milestone landing was made by an F/A-18F Super Hornet piloted by Lt. Matthew L. Enos and Weapon System Officer Lt. Commander Jonathan Welsh from the Red Rippers of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 11.

On November 25, 2011, the “Big E” celebrated its 50th anniversary, making the carrier the oldest active duty ship in the U.S. Naval fleet. The U.S. Navy announced on April 9, 2012, that the final deployment for the *Enterprise* would be with the USS *Abraham Lincoln* in the Persian Gulf. In October 2012, the *Enterprise* transited the Suez Canal for the final time. She paid her last foreign port call when she visited Naples, Italy, in mid-October, which had been the first foreign port-of-call for the *Enterprise* 50 years earlier.

She returned to her homeport at Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia, for the final time on November 4, 2012. After 25 deployments and 51 years of active service, *Enterprise* was officially deactivated December 1, 2012, at Norfolk Naval Station.

The Navy didn’t want to decommission the *Enterprise* officially until Newport News Shipbuilding had removed all the nuclear fuel. The final reactor was defueled in December 2016 and decommissioning occurred on February 3, 2017. The ship was stricken from the Naval Vessel Registry (NVR) that same day.

The “Big E” nevertheless remains the longest serving combat ship in the U.S. Navy and only two ships, the USS *Constitution* and USS *Pueblo* (as of 2012), have served longer as commissioned ships in the U.S. Navy.

*Enterprise* was the first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier to be commissioned and she’ll be the first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier to be decommissioned. Many naval enthusiasts and groups have requested that the *Enterprise* be converted into a museum, but the cost and time of removing the nuclear

reactors made that idea virtually impossible. In any event, there will be very little left to turn into a museum once the Newport News Shipbuilding and the Navy dismantles and recycles the ship's reactors.

Some people and groups have thought it might be possible to save the island from the *Enterprise* as a memorial, but no formal plans were ever announced by the Navy.

## IX ► USS *ENTERPRISE* CVN-80 (2025? - ?)

- **Commissioned:** ..... Scheduled to be 2025
- **Decommissioned:** ..... Some point in the 22ND century
- **Class:** ..... *Gerald R. Ford*-class nuclear-powered aircraft carrier
- **Fate/Status:** ..... Under construction by the Huntington Ingalls Industries - Newport News Shipbuilding in Newport News, Virginia.

The USS *Enterprise* (CVN-80) will be the third aircraft carrier in the Ford-class when it's scheduled for service in 2025 (the USS *Gerald R. Ford* (CVN-78) and the USS *John F Kennedy* (CVN-79) are the first and second, respectively).

CVN-80 will be the third aircraft carrier in the history of the United States Navy to be honored with the name of *Enterprise* and the first U.S. supercarrier since the USS *America* was commissioned in 1966 not to be named in honor of a person.



This is an artist's impression of the future USS *Enterprise* (CVN-80) that is scheduled to be launched in 2025 and commissioned in 2027.

Courtesy U.S. Navy

The USS *Enterprise* (CVN-80) will be built in Newport News, Virginia, by Huntington Ingalls Industries-Newport News Shipbuilding. Construction began in the spring of 2018 when, in an unusual move, a piece of steel from CVN-65 was melted down, recycled, and remade into a keel plate for the new USS *Enterprise*.

The USS *Enterprise* (CVN-80) will be expected to be delivered to the U.S. Navy by 2025. It's currently scheduled to replace USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN-69).

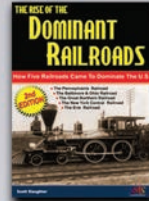
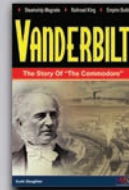
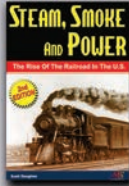
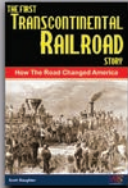
However, according to the Congressional Research Service, it's possible the Navy has recently considered extending the length of time used to build both the USS *John F. Kennedy* (CVN-79) and the USS *Enterprise* by two years to save money. If this is true, the *Enterprise* wouldn't enter service until 2027.



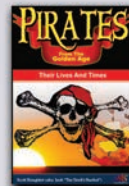
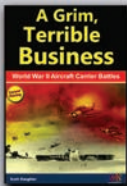
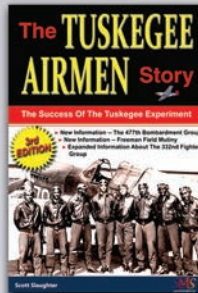


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