

This Day in History... January 21, 1943

Launch of USS *Yorktown*

The fourth USS *Yorktown* was launched on January 21, 1943. During its more than 25 years of service, the *Yorktown* participated World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

Construction of the USS *Yorktown* began on December 1, 1941, in Newport News, Virginia. The USS *Yorktown* (CV-10) was initially to be named the USS *Bon Homme Richard* (French for “good man Richard” and a pseudonym of Benjamin Franklin). But when the USS *Yorktown* (CV-5) was destroyed at the Battle of Midway, it was renamed to honor the lost ship on September 26, 1942.

Sponsored by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, the *Yorktown* was launched on January 21, 1943. It spent much of that first year traveling between the US mainland and Hawaii. In early October, it began two days of airstrikes on Japanese installations on Wake Island.



The Yorktown provided air cover for the Tarawa landings in 1943.

In November 1943, the *Yorktown* embarked on its first major operation – the occupation of the Gilbert Islands. On November 19, the ship launched a series of raids aimed at holding off Japanese air power during amphibious assaults on Tarawa, Abemama, and Makin. Over the next few days, the *Yorktown* continued to support operations on the islands.

While traveling back to Pearl Harbor, the *Yorktown* took part in raids at Wotje and Kwajalein in early December. In January of 1944, the *Yorktown* began the year supporting another amphibious assault, Operation Flintlock, on the Marshall Islands. It then spent the next four months launching raids throughout the Marianas and New Guinea. Throughout the rest of the year, the *Yorktown* participated in raids at Saipan, Palau Islands, Woleai, Hollandia, Guam, the Philippine Sea, Iwo Jima, Leyte, and Luzon.

The *Yorktown* began 1945 by launching strikes on Formosa. It then moved on to Okinawa, which became a primary target for several months. When fighting ended in August, some of the *Yorktown*'s aircraft provided cover for US forces occupying Japan. Following the surrender, it dropped supplies for prisoners of war that were still in prison camps. With the war over, the ship spent several months ferrying American servicemen home. It earned 11 battle stars and a Presidential Unit Citation for its World War II service.



The Yorktown took part in raids on Iwo Jima in 1944 and supported the landings there in 1945.

The *Yorktown* was then decommissioned in 1947 and sat in reserve for nearly five years. It was reactivated again in 1952 and modernized. After its conversion, the *Yorktown* reported to Korea two months after the armistice was signed. It participated in training operations there and earned three Korean War Service Medals (from the US, UN, and Republic of Korea).

Over the next few years, the *Yorktown* traveled to China, Japan, and Manila. In 1957 it was reclassified as an antisubmarine carrier. In 1958 it earned the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal three times. *Yorktown* also went to China and Vietnam in early 1959 and earned additional stars for its Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for its service around Vietnam.

Overhauled in the early 1960s, the *Yorktown* returned to Vietnam in 1964, where it conducted anti-submarine services for the carriers launching airstrikes. *Yorktown* served in Vietnam, Japan, and Korea through 1968. Later that year, part of the film *Tora! Tora! Tora!* was filmed aboard the *Yorktown*. And in December, it served as one of the recovery ships for the Apollo 8 space mission. The *Yorktown* was decommissioned in 1970 and struck from the Navy list in 1973. It was donated to Patriot's Point Development Authority in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1975. Portions of *The Philadelphia Experiment* were filmed aboard the ship in 1984 and it was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1986. Today, the *Yorktown* serves as a museum ship at Patriot's Point and is home to the museum of the Medal of Honor Society.



The Yorktown provided air support during the Battle of Okinawa.



The USS Yorktown (CV-10) was named after the USS Yorktown that was destroyed at the Battle of Midway.



In 1944, the Yorktown participated in the raids on Saipan.



In late 1944, the Yorktown launched air strikes in support of the Leyte invasion.

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