



HISTORY OF THE FIRST RANDOLPH

Our aircraft carrier is the second combatant U. S. naval vessel to bear the name of "Randolph."

The first "Randolph" was a 32-gun frigate which carried a crew of 350. Named for Virginia's Revolutionary War patriot, Peyton Randolph, this ship was one of thirteen of her class, built for the Continental Navy in 1776 on the historic Delaware River, near Philadelphia. Her captain was Philadelphia's gallant officer, Nicholas Biddle. Sailing from that city in 1777, she scoured Atlantic coastal and Caribbean waters for enemy British blockaders. Among the prizes which she captured was the 20-gun warship, "Briton."

In March, 1778, she encountered the British ship-of-the-line, "Yarmouth," a 64-gun frigate. Early in the fight Captain Biddle was injured. Establishing a "Randolph" tradition, he refused to go below, and instead directed operations from a chair on deck. The battle was short but furious. Although "Randolph" was destroyed by a shot into her magazine, she first gave a good account of herself, smashing the topmasts and bowsprit of her more powerful foe.

Modern-day successor to this fighting Revolutionary War ship, "Randolph CV-15," has carried out the frigate's never-say-die traditions. And by launching planes which sank 87,000 tons of Japanese ships, not to mention the other damage done, she has added new lustre to the record of "Randolph" against the enemy.