



NEWS RELEASE



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Wing 11 Honors Naval Aviation with Kitty Hawk Bell

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The quarterdeck bell formerly belonging to USS Kitty Hawk (CV 63) has been on loan for display on the quarterdeck of Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing 11 (COMPATRECONWING 11) since Apr. 2011. The command received the bell after requesting a piece connected to naval aviation history for their quarterdeck from the Naval History and Heritage Command.

The Kitty Hawk affectionately known as the "Battle Cat" to the Sailors who served aboard was the second naval ship named after the birthplace of flight, Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. This is where the Wright brothers' took the first powered airplane flight making history. She was the first and last active ship of her class the last conventionally-fuelled aircraft carrier in service with the U.S Navy before her decommissioning on May 12, 2009. The bell had been used onboard the ship for 49 years to signify the arrival or departure of senior officers and officials, to inform the crew of the time of day, and to announce emergencies.

“As the ships bell it has always been an important part of our naval history, so has the relationship between Surface and Aviation. As we celebrate our 100th year of Naval Aviation, I can think of no better way to highlight that relationship than to proudly display this historic

Bell,” said Wing 11’s Command Master Chief (AW/SW) Debra J. Downs. “All hands are involved with her upkeep, a beautiful stand was hand crafted by Aviation Warfare Systems Operator (AW/NAC) Thomas Gepfrich, and she is shined daily by our young Sailors.”

The bell was blessed by Wing 11’s Chaplain Lt. Cmdr. Alan Cameron before entering service as the ceremonial bell. It was last used during the retirement ceremony of Wing 11’s Command Master Chief Richard Hay on 11 Aug.

“In the spiritual community, there is certain tradition of giving God’s blessing to objects that reminds us of God’s grace,” said Chaplain Lt. Cmdr. Alan Cameron. “The bell was just an instrument to remind the individual of that blessing. It was rung with a sense of honor and will continue to be a reminder of Naval Aviation traditions. This bell, belonging to United States Ship Kitty Hawk (CV 63) it is symbolic of that dedication and sacrifice that generations of Sailors have embraced”.