History of USS AMERICA:

In November of 1776 the Continental Congress ordered the construction of a 74-gun ship of the line to be named AMERICA. This specific class of warship was the state-of-the-art naval weapon of the late eighteenth century, and one of the most complex engineering constructions of its day. AMERICA was also the biggest ship built in North America at the time. She was constructed in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, overseen and launched by Capt. John Paul Jones. However, AMERICA fell victim to politics and even before completion was given to America's ally – France -- in a grand gesture. Although popularly believed to be the first USS AMERICA, she was never commissioned as a U.S. Naval Ship.

The First Official USS AMERICA



The first AMERICA was originally built as a schooner-rigged yacht in New York City and launched on 3 May 1851. The yacht was constructed for a syndicate headed by John Cox Stevens, the commodore of the New York Yacht Club, and including other prominent sportsmen who wished to win recognition for American shipbuilding and sailing skill. She established her fame when she won the trophy, the "America's Cup," from the Royal Yacht Squadron at Cowes, England, on 22 August 1851 – a triumph personally witnessed by Queen Victoria. Subsequently renamed CAMILLA, she was acquired by the Confederate government for service as a blockade runner and despatch boat and arrived at Charleston, S.C., in April 1861. Renamed MEMPHIS but apparently never employed in her intended role, the schooner was scuttled to prevent her use by the Federal Navy. Raised and reconditioned, she was recommissioned under her former name, AMERICA, and served with the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron, taking part in two captures. Withdrawn from blockading service in 1863, she served as a practice [training] ship, first at Newport, R.I., then at Annapolis, Md.; during the ensuing decade; among her commanding officers during that period was Lt. Comdr. George Dewey, future victor of Manila Bay. Sold to private ownership in 1873, AMERICA was ultimately returned to the Navy in 1921. Classified as a naval relic (IX 41) in 1941, AMERICA suffered irreparable damage in 1942, and was scrapped in 1945.

The Second USS AMERICA



The second AMERICA was launched in 1905 and started her life as SS AMERIKA, a German passenger liner. She sailed primarily between Hamburg and New York until the onset of World War I. She was eventually seized by the United States in Boston and later transferred to the U.S. Navy to be commissioned as USS AMERICA (Id. No. 3006), a troop transport. During her service, she conducted nine round-trip voyages during World War I and a further eight after the Armistice, transporting nearly 90, 000 American troops to and from Europe. Transferred to the War Department in 1919, AMERICA served as a U.S. Army Transport until 1920. Reconditioned to return to service as a passenger liner, the ship operated in that capacity until 1932. Taken from the reserve fleet, AMERICA

was renamed EDMUND B. ALEXANDER in 1940, and served again, first as a stationary barracks ship then again as a transport, until 1949. Ultimately, she was scrapped in 1957.

The Third USS AMERICA (CV-66)



The keel for the third AMERICA, a KITTY HAWK-class attack aircraft carrier, was laid on 9 January 1961 at Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, Newport News, Va. She was named AMERICA, the third Navy ship so honored, on 10 January 1962. Christened by Catherine McDonald, wife of the former Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Admiral David McDonald, the ship was launched on 1 February 1964. Eleven months later, on 23 January 1965, she was commissioned USS AMERICA (CVA 66).
AMERICA made her first deployment to the Mediterranean in November 1965 and her second to the Mediterranean in January 1967. And on April 1968 she sailed eastward bound for Vietnam. She would arrive on station 30 May 1968 via the Cape of Good Hope and at 0630 hours the following day, the first aircraft launched in anger against an enemy left her decks. AMERICA would also distinguish herself in action off the coasts of Libya, Iraq, Haiti and Bosnia. Unfortunately, on 9 August 1996, after many years of faithful and dedicated service to her nation, a decommissioning ceremony was held for AMERICA. Her last official deck log entry occurred on 30 September 1996, putting an end her active service. However, in 2005 after many years of inactive service, she was used as a live-fire and evaluation platform. Ultimately, she sunk in a controlled scuttled on 14 May 2005 off the North Carolina coast. USS AMERICA (CV 66) received eight battle stars for service during the Vietnam and Persian Gulf Wars.

The name AMERICA will live on, though, as the Navy's newest amphibious assault ship (LHA 6) will be named USS AMERICA. USS AMERICA (LHA 6) will be the first of the AMERICA-class amphibious assault ships, and she will be the fourth American warship to bear this name. AMERICA will stand-alone among the warships of the world in her design and capability. She replaces an aging TARAWA-class and represents a conscious decision to increase the aviation capacity of future big-deck amphibious assault ships in order to maximize the Navy's investment in future aircraft. She will be built with no well-deck and an extended hangar deck with two higher hangar bay areas, each fitted with an overhead crane for aircraft maintenance. This is a major change in traditional big-deck amphibious design. She will also provide increased aviation fuel capacity, stowage for aviation parts and associated support equipment. Therefore, she will be able to embark and launch the newest in naval aviation, the MV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft and the short take-off vertical landing (STOVL) variant F-35B Lightning II Strike Fighter.

AMERICA will be 844 feet long and 106 feet wide and host an impressive displacement of approximately 44,971 long tons. Her propulsion system will

drive it to speeds in excess of 22 knots, and she will accommodate a crew size of 1,204 Sailor and an additional 1,871 embarked Marines. She will use the same gas turbine propulsion plant, zonal electrical distribution and electric auxiliary systems designed and built for the recently delivered USS MAKIN ISLAND (LHD 8), replacing the maintenance intensive steam turbines of earlier ships. This unique auxiliary propulsion system (APS) was designed for fuel efficiency. Instead of using main propulsion engines to power the ship's shaft, the APS uses two induction-type auxiliary propulsion motors powered from the ship's electrical grid.

AMERICA will facilitate forward presence and power projection as an integral part of joint, interagency, and multinational maritime expeditionary forces, supporting the Marine Corps tenets of Operational Maneuver From the Sea (OMFTS) and Ship to Objective Maneuver (STOM).

Huntington Ingalls Shipbuilding commenced construction of AMERICA in December 2008 at their shipyard in Pascagoula, Miss. The ship’s keel was laid on July 17, 2009 and the ship’s sponsor is Lynne Pace, wife of retired U.S. Marine Corps Gen. Peter Pace, former Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff.