

Patch for USS Kitty Hawk.



GOODBYE, BATTLE CAT

AN HISTORIC AIRCRAFT CARRIER HEADS TO THE SCRAP YARD
BY ROGER CAIN

On 15 January, a heavy gray fog enveloped Bremerton, Washington, and that was particularly appropriate since a huge gray shape was being tugged away from the Naval Base Kitsap-Bremerton to start the long journey to Brownsville, Texas, and a date with the scrapman.

The shape was, of course, the aircraft carrier USS *Kitty Hawk* (CV-63/CVA-63), the last

oil-fired Navy aircraft carrier. The magnificent vessel (built at the 1961 cost of \$264 million; \$2.5 billion in 2022 dollars) was sold to the scrap company for one cent. For another cent, the company also got the USS *John F. Kennedy*. Named after the North Carolina site where the Wright Brothers took flight in their "heavier-than-air" machine in 1903, *Kitty Hawk* was hailed as the first in a "new and greatly improved line of carriers" by then-Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Arleigh Burke.

Kitty Hawk was the first carrier of its class and like the ongoing travails now besieging the first-of-

Kitty Hawk heads off into a thick fog with her massive propellers on the aft flight deck. (Atomic Aerials)