

Great Ships of The U. S. Navy

U.S.S. Curtiss

USS Curtiss (AV-4) was a seaplane tender operating out of Norfolk and in the Caribbean for training and in fleet exercises through the spring of 1941. *Curtiss* was one of 14 ships to receive the early RCA CXAM-1 radar. On 26 May, she got underway for Pearl Harbor from which she served on patrol as well as tending two patrol bomber squadrons. From 15 October-9 November, she voyaged to Wake Island carrying aviators, air-crewmembers, and cargo to reinforce the garrison there.

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, *Curtiss* got underway immediately, firing at the enemy planes. At 08:36, she sighted a periscope and opened fire. A torpedo from the submarine missed *Curtiss*, smashing into a dock at Pearl City. Four minutes later, the Japanese midget submarine surfaced and was further damaged by gunfire before diving again, after which the destroyer *Monaghan* took over with a depth charge attack. *Curtiss* turned her attention to the air again. At 09:05, she hit an enemy plane which crashed into her No. 1 crane and burned. Three minutes later, she splashed a plane, then began firing at a dive bomber. A bomb from this plane struck *Curtiss* in the vicinity of her damaged crane and exploded below decks, setting the hangar and main decks and No. 4 handling room on fire. Despite 19 dead and many wounded, *Curtiss'* crew quenched the fires, then turned to for emergency repairs.

On 28 December, she was underway for San Diego for permanent repairs and replacement of the damaged crane with 20 mm anti-aircraft cannon. Her repairs were completed in only four days; she was back in Pearl Harbor on 13 January 1942 to begin the job of ferrying men and supplies to forward bases at Samoa, Suva, and Nouméa until June.

Departing Pearl Harbor on 2 June 1942, *Curtiss* served as flagship for Commander, Naval Air, South Pacific, at Nouméa, then served as seaplane tender, flagship, repair and supply ship for destroyers and small craft engaged in the Solomons operation from Espiritu Santo until 9 July 1943. After overhaul at San Francisco, she served as flagship at Funafuti, then at Tarawa, Kwajalein, Eniwetok, Saipan, and Guam.

At Okinawa, on 21 June, a kamikaze and its bomb ripped two holes in her hull and exploded on the third deck, killing 35 and wounding 21 of her crew. Effective damage control kept her afloat, and four days later she was underway for the west coast and an overhaul at Mare Island Navy Yard.

She continued to serve with distinction until placed out of commission in reserve on 24 September 1957. *Curtiss* was sold for scrapping in February 1972. [[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Curtiss_\(AV-4\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Curtiss_(AV-4))]

