

# Commanding Officer USS JOHN F. KENNEDY (CV 67)

December 1990 -

**C**aptain John P. Gay, the son of Elbert and Loretta Gay, was born December 4, 1941, in Johnsonburg, Pennsylvania. He graduated from Johnsonburg Area Joint High School and then attended Penn State University. In August 1963, he entered the Naval Aviation Cadet (NAVCAD) program at NAS Pensacola, Florida, and received his commission and wings in Beeville, Texas, in February 1965.

Upon completion of A-4 Skyhawk Fleet Readiness Squadron Training in October 1965, Captain Gay reported to the "Black Diamonds" of VA-216. He completed two combat deployments on board USS Hancock (CVA 19) and USS Coral Sea (CV 43) and a Mediterranean cruise on board USS Saratoga (CV 60).

In May 1969, following his final cruise with the "Black Diamonds," Captain Gay reported to the "Dam Busters" of VA-125 as an instructor pilot and LSO. During this tour, he also served one year additional duty to COMLATWINGPAC as the Wing LSO. Completing transition to the A-7B Corsair II, Captain Gay then reported to the "Ravens" of VA-93 and completed two combat deployments on board USS Midway.

Captain Gay then reported to the Naval Postgraduate School at Monterey, California, and completed his undergraduate work in Government and International Relations. After graduating in June 1975, he reported to Commander, Carrier Group Four in Norfolk, Virginia, where he served as Flag Secretary and Aide. Upon completion of this tour in April 1977, Captain Gay reported to the Staff of the Chief of Naval Operations (OP-96) as a systems analyst.

Following A-7E refresher training, Captain Gay served as Executive Officer and Commanding Officer of the VA-86 "Side-winders," on board USS Nimitz (CVN 68) from November 1979 through June 1982. Following a brief tour on the Staff of the Chief of Naval Operations, Captain Gay re-established Carrier Air Wing Thirteen and served as the Commander from March 1984 to November 1985. During this tour, Captain Gay introduced the F/A-18 to the East Coast and established five new squadrons. Another tour on the Staff of the Chief of Naval Operations followed where Captain Gay served as a Navy planner.



## Captain John P. Gay

Captain Gay then commanded the Guam-homeported USS Niagara Falls (AFS 3) from January 1988 to August 1989. He once again reported to Washington, D.C., to serve as Executive Assistant to Commander, Military Sealift Command.

Captain Gay has accumulated over 4,500 hours in 18 aircraft models and 1,257 landings on 13 different carriers. He is a veteran of 430 combat missions and 28 combat

support missions in Southeast Asia. His awards include the Silver Star, three Legions of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross, two Meritorious Service Medals, 47 Air Medals and various commendations, service, and campaign medals and ribbons.

Captain Gay is married to Carol Stevenson, formerly of Arlington, Virginia, and has two sons, John, Jr., and Justin, who reside in northern Virginia.