



## U.S. Coast Guard History Program

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# Atalanta, 1934

WPC-102

Radio Call Sign: NRGK

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The cutter *Atalanta* was named for the great female athlete in Greek mythology. *Atalanta* was a famous huntress of Arcadia and one of the Argonauts. According to the Greek myth, she could only be married to someone who could outrun her in a race.

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Builder: Lake Union Dry Dock & Machine Works, Seattle, Washington

Launched: 16 June 1934

Commissioned: 20 September 1934

Decommissioned: 1 August 1950

Disposition: Sold to Birchfield Boiler, Inc., of Tacoma, Washington.

Displacement: 1933: 337 tons full load

1945: 350 tons full load

Dimensions:

Length: 165' oa

Beam: 25' 3"

Draft: 7' 8" (1933); 10' (1945)

Machinery: 2 x Winton Model 158 6-cylinder diesels; 1,340 bhp

Propellers: twin, 3-bladed

Performance: Maximum speed: 16.0 knots

Maximum sustained: 14.0 knots for 1,750 statute miles

Cruising: 11.0 knots for 3,000 statute miles

Economic: 6.0 knots for 6,417 statute miles

Complement: 1933: 5 officers, 39 men

1945: 7 officers, 68 men

Armament: 1933: 1 x 3"/23; 1 x 1-pounders;

1941: 1 x 3"/23; 1 x Y-gun; 2 x depth charge tracks;

1945: 2 x 3"/50 (single-mounts); 2 x 20mm/80 (single mounts); 2 x depth charge tracks; 2 x Y-guns; 2 x Mousetraps.

Electronics: 1933: none

1945: Radar: SF; Sonar: QCO

Cost: \$258,000

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### Class History:

The 165-foot "B" Class cutters, sometimes referred to as the Thetis-Class, were a follow on to the 125-foot cutters. Both types of cutters were designed for the enforcement of Prohibition, but the 165-footers primary mission was to trail the mother ships that dispensed alcohol to smaller, faster vessels well beyond the territorial waters of the U.S. Hence these cutters had to have excellent sea-keeping qualities, good accommodations for the crew, and long range. Although Prohibition ended soon after most entered service, their design nevertheless proved to be adaptable to the many other missions of the Coast Guard.

An article written soon after they entered service noted that: "the new cutters are low and rakish, without excessive superstructure or freeboard. A raking stem, well flared bow and cruiser stern give the appearance of speed as well as contribute to the seaworthiness of the vessels, a quality which has been demonstrated in actual service. . .The new ships are twin-screw driven by two 670 horse power Diesel engines, furnished by the Winton Engine Co. of Cleveland, Ohio. The shafting and propellers are arranged and supported in a novel manner. The ship is equipped with two overhanging rudders on a line with and just aft of the propellers. The rudders are supported by a streamline rudder post at the forward end which is bossed out for a bearing to take a stub shaft which extends through the propeller. This method of arranging the rudders has proved remarkably successful. At full speed, the ships turn a complete circle in two minutes and eighteen seconds, and can be docked with ease under the most difficult conditions. On trial runs, the *Atalanta* averaged 16.48 knots at 468 RPM with practically no vibration and the engine under no evident strain. Due to the arduous service for which these vessels were built, only the finest materials available were used. . .It is interesting to note that genuine wrought iron pipe was used for practically all the services where resistance to corrosion, vibration, and strain was required. The fuel oil, lubricating oil, and water service to the main engines and auxiliaries; the fire and bilge system; and the steam heating system were all installed with genuine wrought iron pipe. At the Lake Union plant this pipe was furnished by the Reading Iron Company through the Crane Company's Seattle office and Bowles Company of Seattle. The new ships are a distinct contribution to modern shipbuilding and should be of great value to the Coast Guard."\*

They certainly proved to be of great value to the Coast Guard. Most saw service as coastal convoy escorts during World War II and two, the *Icarus* and the *Thetis*, each sank a U-boat. Many saw service well into the 1960s and some still service as tour boats in New York City with the Circle Tour Line, testament to their sturdy and well-thought out design.

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#### **History:**

The CGC *Atalanta* was built by the Lake Union Dry Dock & Machine Works of Seattle, Washington. She was launched on 16 June 1934 and entered commissioned service on 20 September 1934. She was originally assigned to Seattle, Washington. She conducted search and rescue and law enforcement patrols as well as participating in annual Bering Sea patrols. Her armament was increased in September and October of 1942 at the same yard that constructed her. She was then assigned to duty with the Navy's Western Sea Frontier and continued to be based out of Seattle. She conducted war patrols and escorted merchant vessels throughout the war.

She was decommissioned on 1 August 1950 and placed in storage at the Coast Guard Moorings in Kenndale, Washington. She was sold to Birchfield Boiler, Inc., of Tacoma on 7 December 1954 for \$7,156.00.

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#### **Sources:**

Cutter files, USCG Historian's Office.

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\*Nickum, W. C. "New 'Sisters' of the Coast Guard Patrol Go Into Service." *The Reading Puddle Ball* 3, No. 11 (February 1935), pp. 6-7.

Scheina, Robert L. *U.S. Coast Guard Cutters and Craft in World War II*. (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1982).

U.S. Coast Guard. Public Information Division. Historical Section. *The Coast Guard at War: Transports and Escorts*. (Vol. V, No. I). (Washington, DC: Public Information Division, U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, 1949).

