



## *Nike*, 1934

## WPC-112

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The cutter *Nike* was named for the Greek goddess of victory.

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CLASS: 165-Foot (B) Patrol Craft

BUILDER: Marietta Manufacturing Co., Point Pleasant, WV

COST: \$258,000 per cutter

COMMISSIONED: 24 October 1934

DECOMMISSIONED: 5 November 1964; Sold 9 May 1966.

DISPLACEMENT: 337 tons

PROPULSION: 2 Winton, 6 cylinder, Model 158 diesels; 1,340 bhp

PERFORMANCE: 16.0 knots maximum; 11 knots, 3,000 mile radius cruising;

LENGTH: 165 feet

BEAM: 25 feet, 3 inches

DRAFT: 7 feet, 8 inches

COMPLEMENT: 5 officers, 39 men (1938); 7 officers, 68 men (1945)

ARMAMENT:

1932-1938: One 3"/23; Two 1-pounders

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

1945: Two 3"/50; Two 20mm/80 (single); 2 depth charge tracks; "Y" gun depth charge projector; 2 mousetraps (1945)

SONAR: QCO

### **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 did prove 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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## Cutter History:

USCGC *Nike*, built for the Coast Guard by Marietta Manufacturing Co., Point Pleasant, West Virginia, was launched 7 July 1934. Commissioned as a large cruising cutter, she assumed permanent station at Pascagoula, Mississippi, where she commenced patrol and rescue operations in the late summer of 1934.

The cutter transferred to Gulfport, Mississippi early in 1941. With the outbreak of hostilities, the Coast Guard transferred to the Navy in accordance with Executive Order 8929 of 1 November 1941. *Nike* was one of three cutters rushed to Key West, Florida, in the early weeks of the war. In the months before an effective coastal "dim-out" was inaugurated, Nazi U-boats lay offshore and sank clearly-silhouetted coastal shipping targets. The Gulf Sea Frontier, which included the Florida and Gulf coasts and parts of the Bahamas and Cuba, was only lightly defended during the early stages of the war. Initial defenses consisted of the three Coast Guard cutters *Nike*, *Nemesis*, and *Vigilant*, together with nineteen unarmed Coast Guard planes and fourteen lightly armed Army planes.

Four ships were torpedoed in four days in late February 1942. Forty-one were sent to the bottom by hostile submarine action off the Florida and Gulf coasts in May. As sinkings mounted alarmingly in Gulf Sea Frontier waters, American defensive strength in the area began to increase rapidly and then overwhelmingly.

*Nike* was active in the Gulf Sea Frontier area throughout the war operating out of Key West. She was patrolling as far north as the Delaware coast when she rescued forty survivors from the United Fruit freighter *San Gil* 3 February 1942. Three days later she picked up the entire 38-man crew of the American tanker *China Arrow*, which had been torpedoed off the Maryland coast. The tanker crew had spent two days in lifeboats before a Coast Guard aircraft had alerted the cutter. *Nike* took the survivors to Lewes, Delaware before resuming her patrol duties. She was again on the scene to rescue nine survivors from the torpedoed *Portrero Del Llano* 14 May 1942.

Once peace returned, the Coast Guard returned to the Treasury Department in accordance with Executive Order 9666 of 1 January 1946. Cutter *Nike* resumed patrol and rescue duties in Gulf coastal waters, operating out of Gulfport, Mississippi. She served as a medium endurance cutter in Gulf waters until she decommissioned 5 December 1964 at Orange, Texas. She was sold 19 May to H. Mitchell, Haworth, New Jersey.

*Nike* received one Battle Star for World War II Service.

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