



U.S. Coast Guard History Program

Ariadne, 1934

WPC-101

The cutter *Ariadne* was named for the daughter of Minos and Pasiphaë of Greek mythology. She gave Theseus the thread with which he found his way out of the Minotaur's labyrinth.

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

Launched: 23 March 1934

Commissioned: 9 October 1934

Decommissioned: 23 December 1968

Disposition: Sold on 26 September 1969

Displacement: 1933: 337
1945: 350

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 blades

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

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.

Cutter History:

The CGC *Ariadne* was authorized by an Act of Congress approved on 15 May 1930, which made provision for additional patrol boats and their equipment to be constructed or purchased at the discretion of the Secretary of the Treasury. The request for more cutters was directly attributed to the Coast Guard's enforcement of the Volstead Act. The *Ariadne* was built by the Lake Union Dry Dock & Machine Works of Seattle, Washington for a cost of \$258,000. She was launched on 23 March 1934 and entered commissioned service on 9 October 1934.

She was one of the last of the 165-footers built. The cutter's first home port was San Francisco, where she arrived on 15 October 1934. During her early years she was used in rescue work, law enforcement, and she participated in the Bering Sea Patrol. In connection with the latter, she made her temporary home port at Cordova and Ketchikan.

During World War II, she was assigned to the Navy's Commander, Naval Defense Forces, Western Sea Frontier, San Francisco. Based out of Alameda Island, she conducted anti-submarine patrols and escorted merchant vessels as needed of the waters off San Francisco and the northern California coastal area. She alternated patrols off the entrance to San Francisco Bay with the CGC *Daphne*.

Following World War II, she was transferred to Miami, Florida, where she arrived on 1 November 1945. On 2 April 1946 she took over the tow of the pleasure craft *New Era* from the *Air Falcon*. Four months later she was ordered to Key West where she was placed in caretaker status until 1949. Later she was moved to St. Petersburg where she remained in caretaker status. In April 1949 the *Ariadne* was ordered to the Coast Guard Yard at Curtis Bay, Maryland, for precommissioning work. She was placed in commission for the second time on 11 August 1949 and her home port was designated as Key West. During these post-war years, her primary missions were search and rescue and law enforcement. During her final years in service, she became part of the Coast Guard's "Cuban Patrol."

On 27 March 1950 she attempted to assist the *Mocoma*, which had grounded on Star Reef. She received the Navy Expeditionary Medal for participating in the "Cuban operation," more commonly known as the Cuban blockade, in 1962.

Her last home port was St. Petersburg, which was effective 18 October 1964. On 25 February 1965 she escorted the burning German MV *Schanenberg* to the explosive anchorage at Tampa, Florida. On 26 June 1965 she escorted the burning Irish MV *Irish Poplar* to the explosive anchorage at Tampa. Late in August, 1965, she evacuated 39 Cuban refugees from Cay Sal in the Bahamas and delivered them to Key West. In October of that same year she rescued 36 Cubans from Cay Sal and transported them to Key West. On 12 February 1966 she rescued 14 Cuban refugees from Anguilla Cays and transported them to Key West. On 17 February 1967 she rescued Cuban refugees from Cay Sal and transported them to Key West. On 11 December 1967 she towed the disabled PC *Ginger II* for 30 miles to Fort Lauderdale. On 1 July 1968 she towed a Cuban refugee boat she intercepted 125 miles south of Miami to Key West.

In a formal ceremony at Bayboro Harbor on 23 December 1968, *Ariadne* was "relieved" by the new 210-foot Medium Endurance Cutter *Steadfast* (WMEC-623) and was decommissioned. She then was taken to Port Orange, Texas, where she was sold on 26 September 1969.

During her years of service she earned the following awards: Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Navy Expeditionary Medal, National Defense Service Medal, World War II Victory Medal, American Campaign Medal, and the American Defense Service Medal.

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).

