



U.S.S. BOGUE ( CVE-9 ) CIRCA FEB-APRIL 1944, ATLANTIC OCEAN, VC-95 Sqdn. embarked  
(courtesy Lowell Johnson, VC-95)

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

WASHINGTON

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION to the following Six Anti-Submarine Task Groups which operated with the U.S.S. BOGUE as Flagship:

T.G. 21.12 - United States Ships Bogue, Lea, Greene, Belknap, Osmond Ingram, George E. Badger, and VC-9, from April 20 to June 20, 1943.

T.G. 21.13 - United States Ships Bogue, Osmond Ingram, George E. Badger, Clemson and VC-9, from July 12 to August 23, 1943.

T.G. 21.13 - United States Ships Bogue, Osmond Ingram, George E. Badger, Clemson, Dupont, and VC-19, from November 14 to December 29, 1943.

T.G. 21.11 - United States Ships Bogue, Haverfield, Swenning, Willis, Hobson (until March 25), Janssen (until April 7), and VC-95, from February 28 to April 19, 1944.

T.G. 22.2 - United States Ships Bogue, Haverfield, Swenning, Willis, Janssen, F.M. Robinson, and VC-69, from May 4 to July 3, 1944.

T.G. 22.3 - United States Ships Bogue, Haverfield, Swenning, Willis, Janssen, Wilhoite and VC-42, from August 1 to 24, 1944.

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

"For extraordinary heroism in action against enemy submarines in the Atlantic Area from April 20, 1943, to August 24, 1944. Carrying out powerful and sustained offensive action during a period of heavy German undersea concentrations threatening our uninterrupted flow of supplies to the European theater of operations, these Six Anti-Submarine Task Groups tracked the enemy packs relentlessly and, by the unwavering vigilance and persistent aggressiveness of all units involved, sank a notable number of hostile U-boats. The gallantry and superb teamwork of the officers and men who fought the embarked planes and who manned the BOGUE and her escort vessels were largely instrumental in forcing the complete withdrawal of enemy submarines from supply routes essential to the maintenance of our established military supremacy."

For the President,

*James Forrestal*  
Secretary of the Navy

**U.S.S. BOUGE CVE - 9**  
**( Escort Carrier )**

**SHORT HISTORY**

**From WAR DIARY**

**1942 - Nov. 1944**

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U. S. S. BOGUE

HISTORY OF THE USS BOGUE

Short Version  
To Nov-1944

The Battle of the Atlantic had become an almost desperate fight for the Allies in 1942. Early that year sinkings by submarines had mounted rapidly to nearly 600,000 tons per month and had remained there in spite of the untiring efforts made by the meager anti-submarine forces available. By the end of 1942 the nation had recovered from the initial onslaught and had sufficient forces to clear the submarines from our coastal areas and the Caribbean. Numerous newly built bases from which planes could operate a few hundred miles at sea were responsible.

Deprived of the easy pickings close to land and hampered by the increasing number of escort vessels available to convoys, the German High Command decided upon a major change of tactics. Heretofore the submarines had operated independently, each one assigned a certain area to patrol in which he cruised slowly on the surface submerging only when threatened by attack from ships or aircraft. They now formed the "wolfpack" plan designed to operate against convoys out of the range of land based air cover.

When a convoy was sighted U-boats would assemble and intercept it in force, usually at night and on the surface. A large volley of torpedoes would be fired and the submarines would then retire a high speed to reform for another attack. Attacks frequently lasted for days at a time. Many ships would be sunk, but relatively few U-boats destroyed because the primary mission of the escorts to protect the convoy prevented them from pursuing the enemy effectively without leaving their charges

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unprotected.

To combat these submarines beyond the range of land based aircraft it was decided to assign several small carriers of the converted type to anti-submarine duty in the Atlantic. During 1942 forty-five C-3 type vessels, scheduled to become Liberty ships were in the process of being converted to small aircraft carriers. Thirty-four of them were sold to the British and the rest retained by the United States. This conversion of merchant vessels to aircraft carriers was at that time a stop gap to obtain a number of small carriers in the shortest possible time. The U.S.S. BOGUE was one of these.

She was built by the Seattle-Tacoma Shipbuilding Corporation and launched at Tacoma, Washington, on January 15, 1942, as the S.S. Steel Architect. She was converted during the spring and summer of 1942 and was finally commissioned as the U.S.S. BOGUE on September 26, 1942, in the Puget Sound Navy Yard, Bremerton, Washington, Captain G.E. Short, U.S.N. commanding.\* Her displacement is 13,890 tons, length 495 feet and she now (December, 1944) carries a full complement, including flying personnel, of ninety-seven officers and nine hundred twenty-one men. She is a single screw vessel of 8500 h.p. and has a battery of 2 5"/38 caliber guns, 40-mm and 27 20 mm anti-aircraft weapons.

The first six weeks after commissioning were spent fitting out, making trial runs and generally getting her ready for sea. On 17 November 1942, the Bogue left Bremerton for San Diego, California, where she embarked her first squadron, Composite

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squadron NINE, Consisting of nine torpedo planes and twelve fighters, commanded by Lieutenant Commander W.M. Drane, U.S.N.

During the latter part of November and the first part of December the ship made short cruises off southern California, all hands learning how to operate the ship as a whole and qualifying the new pilots in taking off and landing aboard. During these flights, on 4 December, two planes collided in midair about eight miles from the ship resulting in the deaths of Ensign J.O. Pfeffer, C.M. Marlette Jr., ARM3c and G. Laughlin, S1c, the Bogue's first casualty.

On December 11, the ship left for the East Coast via the Panama Canal. During the trip around, which was her shakedown cruise, training was carried on continuously to get the ship and squadron in a state of readiness for conducting anti-submarine warfare.

Upon arrival at Norfolk, Va., January 1st, 1943, the ship went into the Navy Yard to correct deficiencies noted during the shakedown cruise. This took about three weeks and it was not until the first of February that the Bogue was again underway. Three more weeks of training in Chesapeake Bay followed to bring the ship up to the fine pitch needed for the Battle of the Atlantic.

On February 24, 1943, in company with the USS BELKNAP and the USS GEO. E. BADGER as escorts, the Bogue got underway for Argentia, Newfoundland, the first of its class to go into action against the enemy.

At this time the wolfpacks were getting into full swing and were preying heavily on allied shipping. Sinkings, which had been

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a marked decline in November and December, had risen very rapidly in January and February and reached a discouraging peak almost 600,000 tons in March 1943 - the third highest month of the war to date.

We were faced with the problem of preventing the submarines from reaching a convoy in force once it had been sighted. To do this it was necessary to attack the wolf pack as it was assembling a considerable distance from the convoy. We knew roughly where most the assembling U-boats were or at least that they were assembling and were close because in order to rendezvous effectively they had to communicate with each other and bearings could be taken of their transmissions. The escort carrier seemed to be the only answer and later events proved that to be correct, although the Allied anti-submarine command received a nasty jolt when Britain's first convert carrier to attempt to operate, HMS AVENGER, was sunk on her first cruise by an enemy U-boat.

Up to now the major part of the anti-submarine warfare in the Atlantic had been purely defensive and the stress was on getting the convoys through. It was now believed possible to use the escort carrier as a defensive-offensive weapon which would not only protect convoys but which would sink submarines as well. In fact the mere sight of carrier based aircraft soon had the effect of destroying much of the German's aggressiveness.

(During March, April and May the Bogue operated out of Argentia, Newfoundland, in support of convoys making the trip with vitally needed supplies to the United Kingdom from Canada and the United States. During this period eight enemy U-boats were sighted and

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and attacked by her aircraft and several more by the escorting vessel. Especially noteworthy are the attacks which occurred May 21-22\* while in support of convoy ON-184. This was the first major engagement of the war between carrier based aircraft and enemy submarines attempting to rendezvous for a mass attack on a convoy.

In a period of twenty-four hours six attacks were made on enemy U-boats culminating in the capture of 24 survivors from one of them. The convoy escaped without a single loss and the wolfpack was broken up. Throughout the attacks by aircraft the submarines repeatedly fired on the planes without, however, inflicting serious casualties. The reluctance of the U-boats to submerge indicated that they doubted the ability of carrier based aircraft to inflict serious damage on them.]

The Bogue returned to Argentia, Newfoundland, on May 26th and five days later was underway again for another go at subs.

About this time it had been observed that the main U-boat concentrations were shifting from the North Atlantic supply routes to harass the convoys en route to North Africa. At that time the Allied offensive in North Africa was going full blast. It seems likely that the U-boats were ordered disrupt the flow of supplies to that theatre of war at all costs. In any event, they had thrown a patrol line of submarines across the convoy lanes to North Africa and it was against these U-boats that the Bogue was ordered to operate.

To reduce the hazard of U-boat anti-aircraft fire and to permit greater accuracy of bombing, a fighter plane was teamed up with each bomber. When attacking a submarine the fighter would strafe the

to clear them of the men manning the guns and the bomber would

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proceed to lay his bombs accurately and effectively.]

Results came swiftly for on June the fourth Bogue planes broke up an assembly of U-boats lying directly across the path of a large convoy bound for Africa. Four separate attacks were made in forty-eight hours which effectively prevented the convoy from receiving any damage. Three days later a submarine only ten miles from the convoy was attacked and driven off badly damaged. Again, four days later another sub was attacked and sunk from which seventeen prisoners were taken. Having seen the convoy safely across, the Bogue proceeded to Norfolk, Va., arriving on June 20th.

On July 9, 1943 Captain Short left the Bogue for duty in the Pacific and Captain J.B. Dunn, U.S.N. took command to continue the work so well started by his predecessor.

The next cruise of the Bogue <sup>(July 1943)</sup> revealed three new developments on the part of the U-boats. The first was the large scale use of "mother subs, large craft capable of carrying quantities of fuel, provisions and torpedoes for the smaller, operating craft. The second was the appearance of a much more formidable anti-aircraft battery on the U-boat which resulted in many casualties among land based planes but which was effectively counter balanced by the use of fighters in carrier air groups. The third was the installation of radar on many of the German U-boats which enabled them to search more efficiently at night. In addition, the Germans had begun to realize that we were locating many of them by their promiscuous radio transmissions and coincidentally the idea of the wolf pack was gradually abandoned in favor of more independent operation.

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On this cruise the Bogue's planes caught a refueler in the act of supplying another U-boat and straightaway sank her, recovering thirteen prisoners, including the U-boat's captain. The second submarine escaped. The same day another U-boat was attacked by a Bogue plane. One of the destroyers screening the Bogue joined in the attack and sank the sub with depth charges. This was on July 23rd and the Bogue continued her cruise protecting the African convoys until August 22nd without further incident.

At this time the squadron, VC-9 which had done such yeoman service for nearly <sup>ONE</sup> two years with the Bogue was sent ashore for a rest, and a new squadron, Composite Squadron Nineteen, consisting of twelve bombers and nine fighters, reported aboard commanded by Lieutenant Commander C.W. Stewart, U.S.N.

The seventh war cruise of the Bogue lasted from September 5th to October 20th. During this cruise only one U-boat was sighted and it escaped without damage. The paucity of enemy submarines entering the Atlantic during August and September was due to several causes among which were: a high rate of U-boat sinkings in June and July, especially refuelers, the return of many U-boats for radical increase of anti-aircraft armament, and the shifting of submarine concentrations to yet other locations. It must be remembered that by this time several carriers were operating in the Atlantic besides the Bogue, very long range planes had been developed to operate as much as a thousand miles out to sea, and the surface fleet of destroyers and escort vessels had been tremendously increased since the dark days of early 1942. In addition it is believed that the Germans introduced a new weapon about this time - the acoustic

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torpedo - which would turn itself toward a ship under the influence of the noise of the vessel's propellers. The ingenious invention caused the Allies sleepless nights for awhile but, although sinkings went up in September due to its use, the remedy was soon found and less ships were sunk in October than ever before.

Convoys were now protected as was not possible only a few months before. Instead of having to get along with World War I type subchasers, Coast Guard Cutters and converted yachts, a huge fleet of powerful new destroyers and destroyer escort vessels was taking over the job. Except for the screens around convoys, defensive warfare became a thing of the past. Both carrier groups and land based aircraft were ordered to hunt the U-boat relentlessly and destroy him.

So it was that the next cruise of the Bogue was strictly an offensive mission, going to the areas where U-boats were known to be lurking and to attack them. The Bogue's score for this trip which lasted from November 14th till New Year's Eve was five successful attacks\* including forty-six Nazi prisoners who spent their Christmas holidays aboard, although not by choice.

A lull in the Bogue's anti-submarine activities took place during January and February when she temporarily became an aircraft ferry ship. A load of Army fighter planes was taken aboard for the coming invasion of Europe and delivered at Glasgow, Scotland, without incident.

Upon returning to the United States another new squadron reported aboard, Composite Squadron Ninety-Five, veterans of the invasion of North Africa, commanded by Lieutenant John Adams, U.S.N.A.

\*See Appendix C, D.

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During the Bogue's absence the enemy had altered his tactics once again. Having developed a thorough respect for aircraft due to the operations of our carrier groups and long range shore based aircraft, the U-boats were now remaining submerged all day, only coming up at night when they felt relatively safe from attack. This made it harder to locate them but it reduced markedly their ability to locate and sink ships. And although the U-boat's effectiveness had reached a new low in the first few months of 1944 they were still being sunk in numbers greatly disproportionate to the amount of damage they were doing. Planes began to hunt them at night when they lay on the surface charging their batteries and many groups of surface vessels hunted them day and night, especially during North Atlantic weather in which planes could not fly.

The cruise of the Bogue from February 27 to April 19 was productive of but one successful attack.\* During the month of April only three ships were sunk by enemy submarines in the Atlantic out of a total of nearly 1600 ships making the crossing.

The same situation obtained in May with only three merchant vessels being lost that month in all areas while twenty-one submarines were sunk. The hunter was now indeed the hunted with a vengeance! Strangely enough, however, it was during this month that we suffered the heaviest naval loss in the Atlantic of the war - the USS BLOCK ISLAND, a sister ship of the Bogue, was torpedoed and sunk.

The German submarine campaign was dying hard, however. In spite of severe losses many remained at sea, a constant menace to our ships should vigilance be relaxed for an instant. Our planes and

\* See Appendix E

ships scoured the Atlantic, often spending many days to track down one U-boat.

The Bogue's cruise from May 5 to July 2nd was noteworthy in several respects. She had a new Captain, A.B. Vosseller, U.S.N., formerly Commander Anti-Submarine Development Detachment, Atlantic Fleet, a new squadron - VC-69, Lieutenant Commander J.D. Taylor, Commanding, was aboard, and it marked the beginning of concentrated night searches by carrier aircraft. This cruise netted two, possibly three sinkings.\* One "Kill" was made by aircraft, the other by the escorts of the task group.

The cruise was markedly different from previous ones. When Admiral Doenitz stated on August 4, 1942 that, "The airplane can no more eliminate the U-boat than a crow can fight a mole" he, as usual, had his metaphors slightly mixed - or perhaps he had seen the shape of things to come and was only trying to bolster the morale of his shaken crews. He might better have compared his U-boats to their closer counterpart, the rat, (or the mouse, for they were certainly becoming timid) and likened the airplane to the hawk. The U-boats had taken such a beating from the airplanes in daylight on the surface that it had become more and more apparent the Germans had acquired such a healthy respect for our carrier borne planes that they surfaced by day only with great reluctance.

What could they do? Why, surface only at night was the only possible course left open in spite of the disadvantages imposed by limited cruising range, reduced powers of observation, and increased hardship upon the crew. The U-boats were by this time practically

impotent but the only thing a Nazi understands is a beating so...

\* See Appendix F.

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possible preparations were made to emphasize night flying. Bogue pilots would have to become owls as well as hawks, both birds of prey, to hunt Admiral Doenitz's rodents night and day. It had been done before but never on the scale upon which the Bogue operated at night on this cruise, thru good and bad weather and the light and the dark of the moon. 892.8 hours at night were logged on this cruise out of a total of 3230.2 flown, both being totals which, it is not believed have been exceeded in this ocean. It paid off however resulting in the first successful night attack by a carrier plane which killed a fat Jap (the first to be nailed by a CVE plane) headed for Germany with a cargo of crude rubber, among other things. Plenty of evidence floated to the surface to substantiate this kill and establish the identity of the victim. This was two more firsts for the Bogue at one time, three firsts if the fact that it was accomplished by flare illumination is added. A first for the mere fact that it was a Jap cannot be counted to make it four-in-one, for one of the Bogue escorts had already sunk the first Jap to be killed in the Atlantic only a little while before.

The following cruise, July 24 to September 24, was similar in character. One submarine was positively sunk netting forty-two prisoners. Still another squadron made this cruise, VC-42, commanded by Lieutenant J.T. YAVORSKY, U.S.N.

A notable feature of this cruise was the use of the aircraft searchlight on carrier based aircraft. Such a light had been in use for sometime on large land based seaplanes and landplanes but this cruise marked its first use, and the first attack made on an enemy submarine by a S/L equipped carrier plane. The attack was

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perfectly delivered, the submarine was completely surprised, the plumes from the bomb explosions were seen to envelope the submarine and in the morning the area was covered with oil. However no prisoners were taken and no debris which could positively indentified as coming from a submarine were picked up so the results have not yet been assessed.

On this cruise, contact was made with only three submarines, one was sunk, one was the victim of the S/L attack described above and the other probably escaped thru the use of a device found on the one sunk, namely "Schnorchel". This is simply an air periscope which permits the submarine to cruise slowly on its diesels remaining submerged at all times; what a change this marked for the U-boats. Gone now are the days when U-boats brazenly cruised on the surface searching for prey, disdaining to submerge until actually attacked. The tables have indeed been turned, and the hunter becomes the hunted! Not only have sinkings by U-boats dropped off to the vanishing point but the number of U-boats at sea too is very small and those who venture out must plan to stay submerged practically all the times, to avoid contact with us at all times, and to avoid being sighted at all times.

Of course this state of affairs has had a profound effect upon the tactics of sub-hunting. A big change has transpired since the "Wolf-pack" days when an aggressive CVE captain could always be sure of finding plenty of submarines to attack. The Germans now are not only much scarcer and hence harder to find but also a great deal warier and harder to kill. A contact now is a precious thing, and a few will occur in any cruise and they must be developed and held.

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onto with every ounce of skill and endurance it is possible to muster. Thus, one hunt lasted twenty days\* being interrupted only by periods of fog when the surface escorts had to take over, and one lasted continuously for seven days and nights without a single let-up. The Bogue is a baby flat-top after all and has a limited complement of planes and pilots. What a such a long period of sustained operations means must be experienced to be appreciated!

During the year and a half of the Bogue's operations to date (November 30, 1944) against enemy submarines which covered eleven war cruises, her aircraft and escorts, working together in close cooperation, have attacked a total of twenty-five U-boats. By Official Navy assessment nine of these were positively sunk, three very probably sunk, four badly damaged, three slightly damaged and results are as yet unknown on six others. It is hoped that most of these also met watery graves. When it is remembered that several other CVEs engaged in this duty have approached the Bogue's record it is no wonder a Nazi radio announcer told the home front "It must be admitted that aircraft give our (U-boat) men some trouble". Some trouble to be sure!

\*See Anti-Submarine Warfare Secret Bulletin for October 1944.