

CASABLANCA

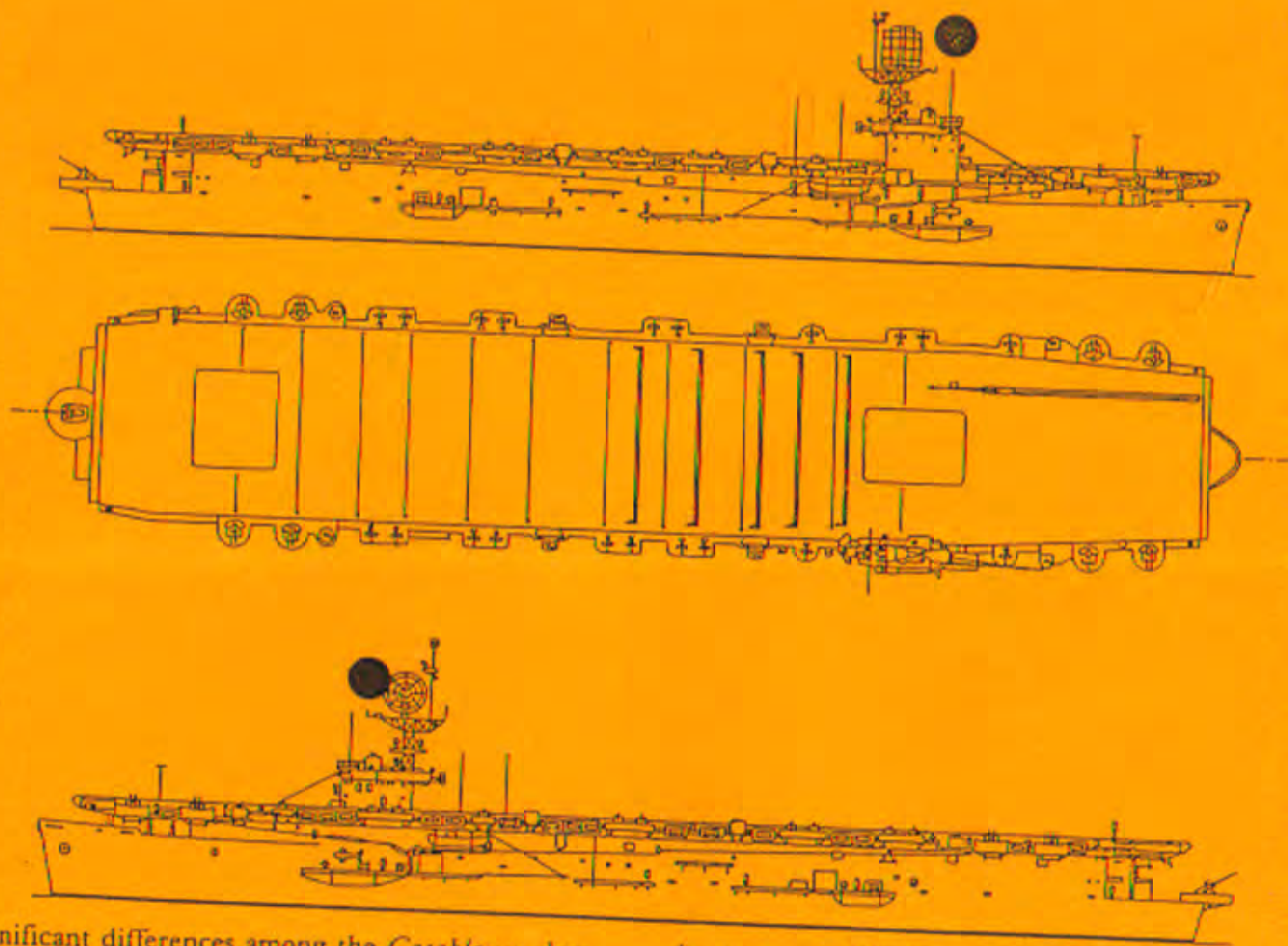
CLASS

CASABLANCA CLASS





The first and last of the Fifty Sisters, the Munda CVE-104 (left) and USS Casablanca CVE-55 (right) in San Diego, California. The USS Casablanca was under repair after storm damage.



The only significant differences among the *Casablanca* class CVEs were in the radar antennas. The starboard side profile and the deck plan show USS *White Plains* (CVE-66); most of the ships between CVE-55 and -97 looked like this, with the exception of CVE-65, which still featured SC at the end of

the war, and CVE-96 which still had SC-2 in 1945. The first four units of this class were also fitted with SC-2. The port side elevation shows the typical appearance of later ships, from USS *Kwajalein* (CVE-98) to USS *Munda* (CVE-104).

Ship	Builder	Laid down	Launched	Commissioned
<i>Casablanca</i> (CVE-55)	Kaiser	3 Nov 42	1 Apr 43	8 July 43
<i>Liscombe Bay</i> (CVE-56)	Kaiser	9 Dec 42	19 Apr 43	7 Aug 43
<i>Arzio</i> (CVE-57)	Kaiser	12 Dec 42	1 May 43	27 Aug 43
<i>Corregidor</i> (CVE-58)	Kaiser	17 Dec 42	12 May 43	31 Aug 43
<i>Mission Bay</i> (CVE-59)	Kaiser	28 Dec 42	26 May 43	13 Sept 43
<i>Guadalupe</i> (CVE-60)	Kaiser	5 Jan 43	5 June 43	25 Sept 43
<i>Manila Bay</i> (CVE-61)	Kaiser	15 Jan 43	10 July 43	5 Oct 43
<i>Natoma Bay</i> (CVE-62)	Kaiser	17 Jan 43	20 July 43	14 Oct 43
<i>St. Lo</i> (CVE-63)	Kaiser	23 Jan 43	17 Aug 43	23 Oct 43
<i>Tripoli</i> (CVE-64)	Kaiser	1 Feb 43	2 Sept 43	31 Oct 43
<i>Wake Island</i> (CVE-65)	Kaiser	6 Feb 43	15 Sept 43	7 Nov 43
<i>White Plains</i> (CVE-66)	Kaiser	11 Feb 43	27 Sept 43	15 Nov 43
<i>Solomons</i> (CVE-67)	Kaiser	19 Mar 43	6 Oct 43	21 Nov 43
<i>Kalinin Bay</i> (CVE-68)	Kaiser	26 Apr 43	15 Oct 43	27 Nov 43
<i>Kasaan Bay</i> (CVE-69)	Kaiser	11 May 43	24 Oct 43	4 Dec 43
<i>Fanshawe Bay</i> (CVE-70)	Kaiser	18 May 43	1 Nov 43	9 Dec 43
<i>Kikuan Bay</i> (CVE-71)	Kaiser	31 May 43	8 Nov 43	15 Dec 43
<i>Talaga</i> (CVE-72)	Kaiser	7 June 43	15 Nov 43	21 Dec 43
<i>Gambier Bay</i> (CVE-73)	Kaiser	10 July 43	22 Nov 43	28 Dec 43
<i>Nehalem Bay</i> (CVE-74)	Kaiser	20 July 43	28 Nov 43	3 Jan 44
<i>Hoggatt Bay</i> (CVE-75)	Kaiser	17 Aug 43	4 Dec 43	11 Jan 44
<i>Kadashan Bay</i> (CVE-76)	Kaiser	2 Sept 43	11 Dec 43	28 Jan 44
<i>Marcus Island</i> (CVE-77)	Kaiser	15 Sept 43	16 Dec 43	26 Jan 44
<i>Savo Island</i> (CVE-78)	Kaiser	27 Sept 43	22 Dec 43	3 Feb 44
<i>Omanawa Bay</i> (CVE-79)	Kaiser	6 Oct 43	29 Dec 43	11 Feb 44
<i>Petrof Bay</i> (CVE-80)	Kaiser	15 Oct 43	5 Jan 44	18 Feb 44
<i>Rudyard Bay</i> (CVE-81)	Kaiser	24 Oct 43	12 Jan 44	25 Feb 44
<i>Supton Bay</i> (CVE-82)	Kaiser	1 Nov 43	19 Jan 44	2 Mar 44
<i>Sargent Bay</i> (CVE-83)	Kaiser	8 Nov 43	31 Jan 44	9 Mar 44
<i>Shamrock Bay</i> (CVE-84)	Kaiser	15 Nov 43	4 Feb 44	15 Mar 44
<i>Shiplay Bay</i> (CVE-85)	Kaiser	22 Nov 43	12 Feb 44	21 Mar 44
<i>Sikob Bay</i> (CVE-86)	Kaiser	23 Nov 43	19 Feb 44	28 Mar 44
<i>Steamer Bay</i> (CVE-87)	Kaiser	2 Dec 43	26 Feb 44	4 Apr 44
<i>Cape Esperance</i> (CVE-88)	Kaiser	11 Dec 43	3 Mar 44	9 Apr 44
<i>Takanis Bay</i> (CVE-89)	Kaiser	16 Dec 43	10 Mar 44	15 Apr 44
<i>Thetis Bay</i> (CVE-90)	Kaiser	22 Dec 43	16 Mar 44	21 Apr 44
<i>Makassar Strait</i> (CVE-91)	Kaiser	29 Dec 43	22 Mar 44	29 Apr 44
<i>Windham Bay</i> (CVE-92)	Kaiser	5 Jan 44	29 Mar 44	3 May 44
<i>Mackin Island</i> (CVE-93)	Kaiser	12 Jan 44	5 Apr 44	9 May 44
<i>Lunga Point</i> (CVE-94)	Kaiser	19 Jan 44	11 Apr 44	14 May 44
<i>Bismarck Sea</i> (CVE-95)	Kaiser	31 Jan 44	17 Apr 44	20 May 44
<i>Salomaua</i> (CVE-96)	Kaiser	4 Feb 44	22 Apr 44	26 May 44
<i>Hollandia</i> (CVE-97)	Kaiser	12 Feb 44	28 Apr 44	1 June 44
<i>Kvaeslein</i> (CVE-98)	Kaiser	19 Feb 44	4 May 44	7 June 44
<i>Admiralty Islands</i> (CVE-99)	Kaiser	26 Feb 44	10 May 44	13 June 44
<i>Bougainville</i> (CVE-100)	Kaiser	3 Mar 44	16 May 44	18 June 44
<i>Matanikau</i> (CVE-101)	Kaiser	10 Mar 44	22 May 44	24 June 44
<i>Aitu</i> (CVE-102)	Kaiser	16 Mar 44	27 May 44	30 June 44
<i>Rei</i> (CVE-103)	Kaiser	22 Mar 44	2 June 44	6 July 44
<i>Monda</i> (CVE-104)	Kaiser	29 Mar 44	8 June 44	8 July 44

Displacement: 8,200 tons / 8,331 tonnes (standard); 10,900 tons / 11,074 tonnes (deep load).

Length: 490ft / 149.35m (wl); 512ft 3in / 156.13m (ol); 475ft / 144.78m (ld).

Beam: 65ft 3in / 19.92m (full); 45ft / 13.91m (ld).

Machinery: Skinner Uniflow reciprocating engines; 4 boilers; 2 shafts.

Performance: 9,000shp; 19kts.

Bunkerage: 2,200 tons / 2,235 tonnes.

Range: 10,200nm at 15kts.

Guns: 1 x 5in; 8 x 40mm; 12 x 20mm.

Complement: 860.

Design With the United States totally in the grip of a prolonged war with Japan and the pattern of Pacific naval campaigns being well established, the requirement for yet further aircraft transports was plain to see. Britain's need of additional escort carriers to fight the Atlantic U-boat war was also great, and indeed it was in the US interest to ensure that these would be made available.

Speedy entry into service was the driving consideration, and in 1942 Henry J. Kaiser proposed to the US Government a scheme for the mass-production of such vessels, using the S4 special naval hull, which was already being used for the merchantmen his company was building. A rigorous construction schedule was presented, and the US authorities had no hesitation in responding positively to the ideas: fifty vessels were to be built at one yard, all within twelve months. In the event, the Navy decided against transferring any of the ships to the Royal Navy, diverting later batches of *Bogues* instead.

The *Casablanca* were marginally smaller than the *Bogues* and, with a similar air group, proved somewhat cramped. The hulls had markedly less sheer, which improved mobility on the hangar deck and manifested itself externally in that the sponsons were virtually parallel to the waterline. A transom stern was a feature of the design, enabling only one single 5in / 38 to be mounted aft.

Flight deck and island configuration closely followed that adopted for the *Bogues*, but the class differed fundamentally in being fitted with triple-expansion reciprocating engines, driving two screws; speed was increased somewhat, but range fell off. Water-tube boilers (Babcock & Wilcox, Foster Wheeler or Combustion Engineering) were fitted. Petrol storage was 100,000 US gallons.

The original standard close-range armament consisted of twin 40mm and single 20mm, and all ships were fitted with SC air search (or its developed successor SC-2, SK or SK 2) and SG surface search radars, plus the standard carrier YE homing beacon at the masthead. The designed aircraft complement numbered nine fighters (F4F) and either nine torpedo-bombers (TBF) and nine dive-bombers (SBD) or eighteen torpedo-bombers.

Modifications By the end of the war most units had an augmented AA armament, with eight twin 40mm mountings and thirty 20mm, disposed in 'tubs' just below flight-deck level. Radar suites remained essentially unchanged although many early ships had their SC sets upgraded to SC-2 or SK (requiring essentially the substitution of a new, DF-bearing improved antenna). *Salomaua* had a zenith search facility (SG-6) by 1945.