

Analysis of photo NS02xx01

by David Buell



Photo by Anita Russell, via her daughter, Amy Cohen

I think that this Mystery Photo #1 Carrier is definitely USS *Lake Champlain* CV 39. She was in the Atlantic at this time and is the most probable Carrier to fit this ID.

I have arrived at this conclusion through a process of elimination of evaluating photographs and other data of all long hull *Essexes* in commission at this time:

CV 14	Ticonderoga	Not in the Atlantic, but in the Pacific at this time and then decommissioned in the Pacific without returning to Atlantic until the '50s.
CV 15	Randolph	In the Atlantic at this time, but until decommissioning in '47 had visible brackets on the starboard side where 40mm sponsons had been installed and then removed. The ship in the photo has none.
CV 19	Hancock	In the Pacific at this time and went out of commission there. Had the starboard sponsons at war's end.
CV 21	Boxer	In the Pacific at this time. Had the additional sponsons for the 40mm installed in 1945, and probably had the starboard sponsons in place until late 1947.
CV 32	Leyte	In the Atlantic at this time. Commissioned without shields on 40mm mounts and

		no radar on the mainmast in the forward position. The ship in the photo has what looks like an SP.
CV 33	Kearsarge	In the Atlantic at this time. Commissioned without shields on 40mm mounts. Did not have bloomers on 5" barrels at this time. Had downward-angled bow 40mm gun tub top edges as CV 37.
CV 36	Antietam	In the Pacific at this time and went out of commission there. Had the shields on the 40mm. Had the starboard sponsons installed after arriving in the Pacific in 1945, then removed by 1949.
CV 37	Princeton	In the Atlantic initially then onto Pacific at this time and decommissioned there. The bow 40mm tub top edges had a slight downward angle toward the outboard sides. CV 39 tubs were level.
CV 38	Shangri-La	In the Pacific at this time but made a quick trip to Norfolk. Her island-mounted starboard 20mm platforms were longer than CV 39, had 40mm shields, but no bloomers on the 5" barrels at this time.
CV 39	Lake Champlain	Had "bloomers" on the 5" barrels, level gun tub top edges, shields on the 40mm, cross bars on her two forward radio masts, SP radar, the fuel line on starboard side matches other CV 39 photos.
CV 40	Tarawa	In the Atlantic, but never had shields on the 40mm mounts from commissioning. Had SX radar on foremast. Ship in photo does not. <i>Tarawa</i> did have bloomers at times.
CV 45	Valley Forge	In the Atlantic, but never had shields on the 40mm mounts from commissioning. Had SX radar on foremast from commissioning. Ship in photo does not. CV 45 did however have bloomers at times.
CV 47	Philippine Sea	In the Atlantic, but never had shields on the 40mm mounts from commissioning. Had no radar on mainmast in the forward position at this time.

Granted the 5" gun "bloomers" usage came and went, but some ships never carried them at all or at a time not in this reference. However, it is an added point to add to other evidence and locational data noted above.

Two photos of CV 39 that I have sent to NavSource ([1](#), [2](#)) are good reference photos to compare to the mystery photo. They are clear and allow comparison to ship equipment details.

I believe that the number on the bow is probably a "39" however blurry. It does seem to have the shape.

Therefore, using these points as processes of elimination, I strongly feel that the Mystery Photo #1 is USS *Lake Champlain*, CV 39.