

USS WASP BUILDERS TRIALS DECEMBER 18th 1939

PHOTO ANALYSIS BY DARREN LARGE

Introduction

The basis of all analysis of the images in this report is this newspaper article from the Evening Star.

THE EVENING STAR, WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1939.



Tarpaulins Shroud Deck On Wasp's Trial Trip

By the Associated Press.

QUINCY, Mass., Dec. 19.—Tarpaulins shrouding sections of her deck to protect secret equipment from prying eyes, the United States Navy's newest airplane carrier, the \$21,000,000 Wasp, steamed off the New England coast last night on a builder's trial trip.

Approximately 5,000 persons lined the shores of Fore River as the huge vessel, most modern of its type in the world, was eased by tugs into open water.

Officials of the Navy and of the Bethlehem Steel Co.'s Fore River plant, where she was built, declined to reveal her course or to give an exact description of the vessel.

At the time of her launching last April, she was described by Washington sources as having an overall length of 739 feet, a 110-foot beam and a displacement of about 14,700 tons.

Seventh United States naval vessel to bear the name, the Wasp is expected to be turned over to the Navy next April.

QUINCY, MASS.—NEW UNITED STATES AIRPLANE CARRIER—Builders' trials began yesterday for the new airplane carrier Wasp, shown above as she left her Fore River yard dock to cruise off the coast for a week. In conformity with naval custom, dimensions and other specific descriptions of the ship were not disclosed. During launching of the Wasp last April two naval airplanes crashed in midair, killing four men, while flying over area.

—A. P. Wirephoto.

The image in the article represents the first time that the ship left the yard. Dated the 19th of December, the article refers to the carrier leaving the shipyard yesterday, making the date of the sailing Monday 18th December, 1939.

There at least three occasions that the Wasp departed and arrived the shipyard:

- December 18th 1939 for builder's trials "off the New England Coast".
- February 12th 1940 to enter Dry Dock at South Boston Naval Annex
- April 23rd 1940, Preliminary Acceptance Trials

There are a number of features visible in the picture which match up to other images taken during her departure from the yard. Moreover, the next dated photograph is Wasp in dry dock on the 13th Feb 1940 which show her to have boat booms and catapult outriggers installed.

- A) A group of around 10 people have congregated on the Radar Platform.
- B) Boat booms are absent.
- C) The most forward roller door is open.
- D) Track for the paravane which was removed after her sea trials in Feb.

Images

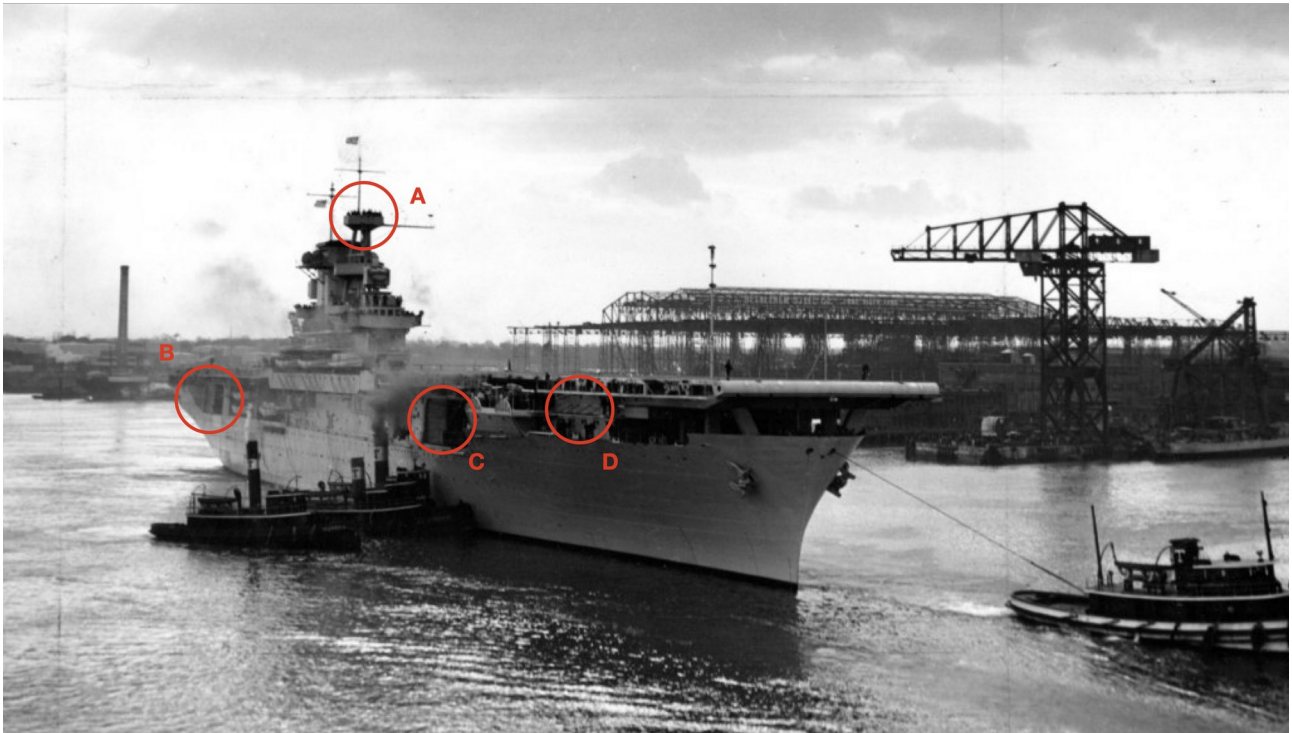


Image 1: USS Wasp leaving the Fore River Shipyard on the 18th December, 1939.

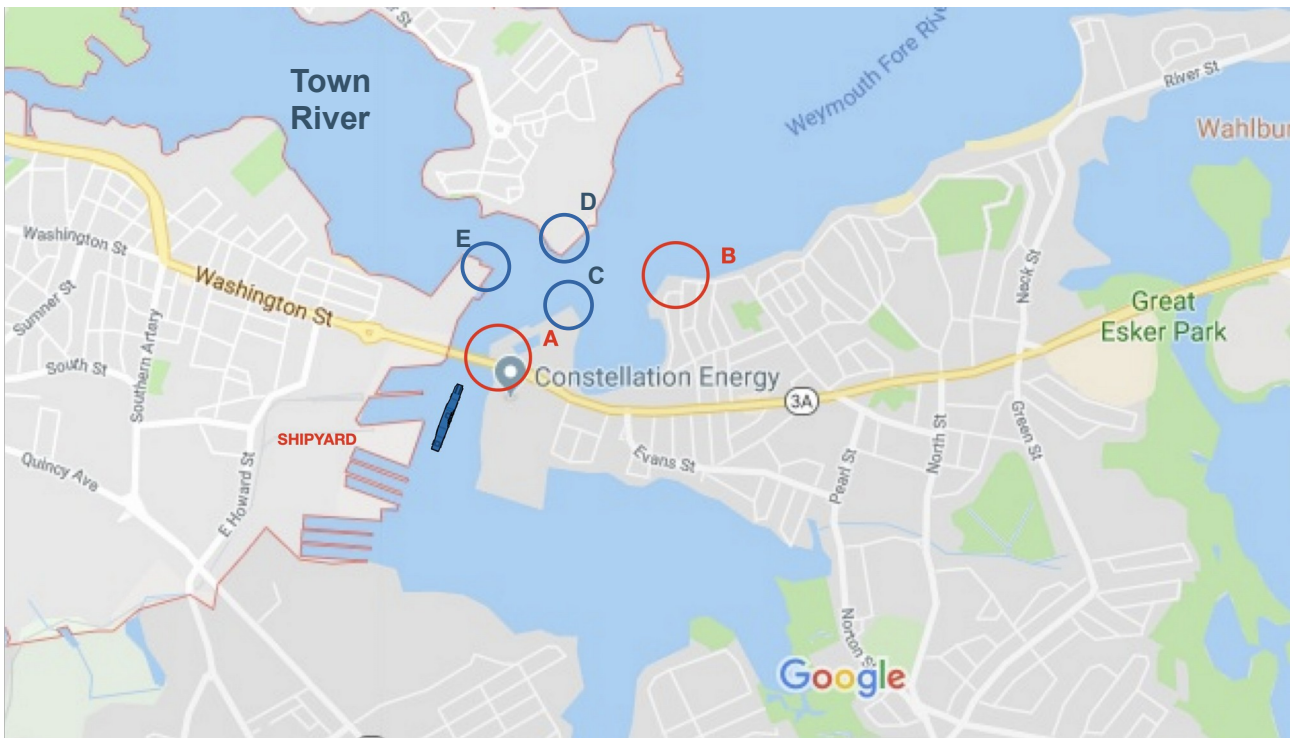


Image 2: The locations of the photographer on the 18th December, 1939. The Fore River road bridge (A) and Hunt Hill Point (B). Also present in the pictures are Ferry Point (C), Germantown Point (D) and Shipyard Point (E).

Image 3: A second view from the road bridge of Wasp departing the shipyard on 18th December, 1939.

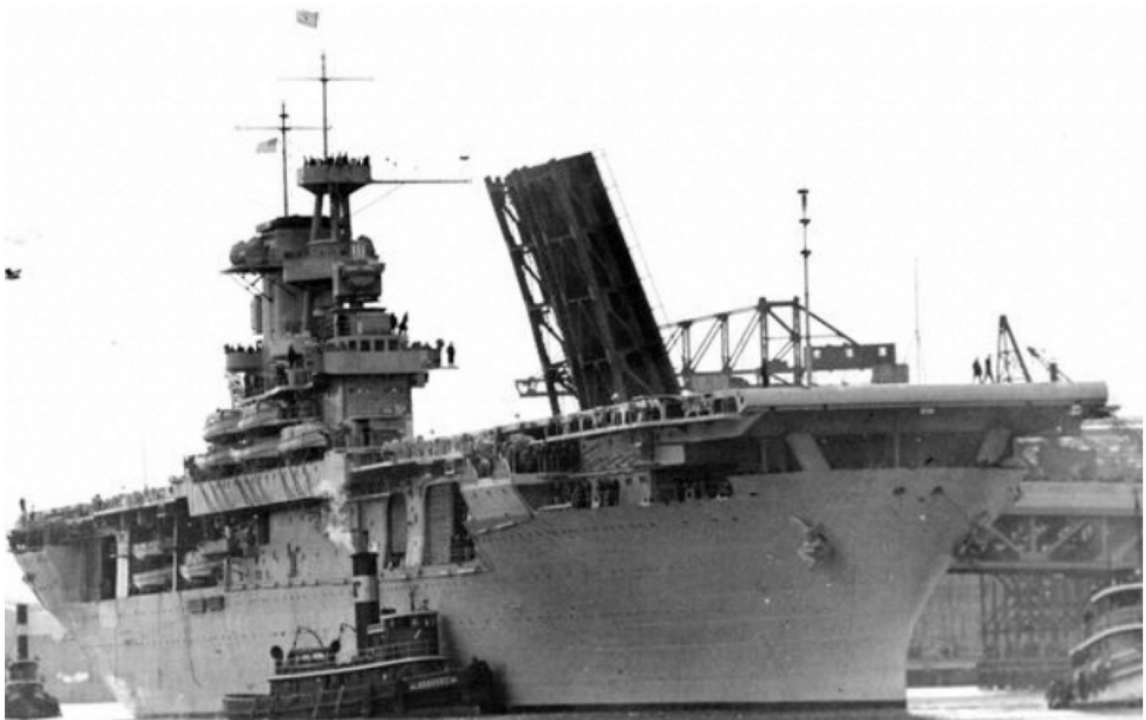


Image 4: Wasp leaving the For River Shipyard and passing through the raised road bridge on 18th December, 1939. This photograph was taken from Hunt Hill Point (possibly the closer Ferry Point).



Image 5: A view of the road bridge looking east from Quincy to Weymouth. The Edison power station is visible to the right.

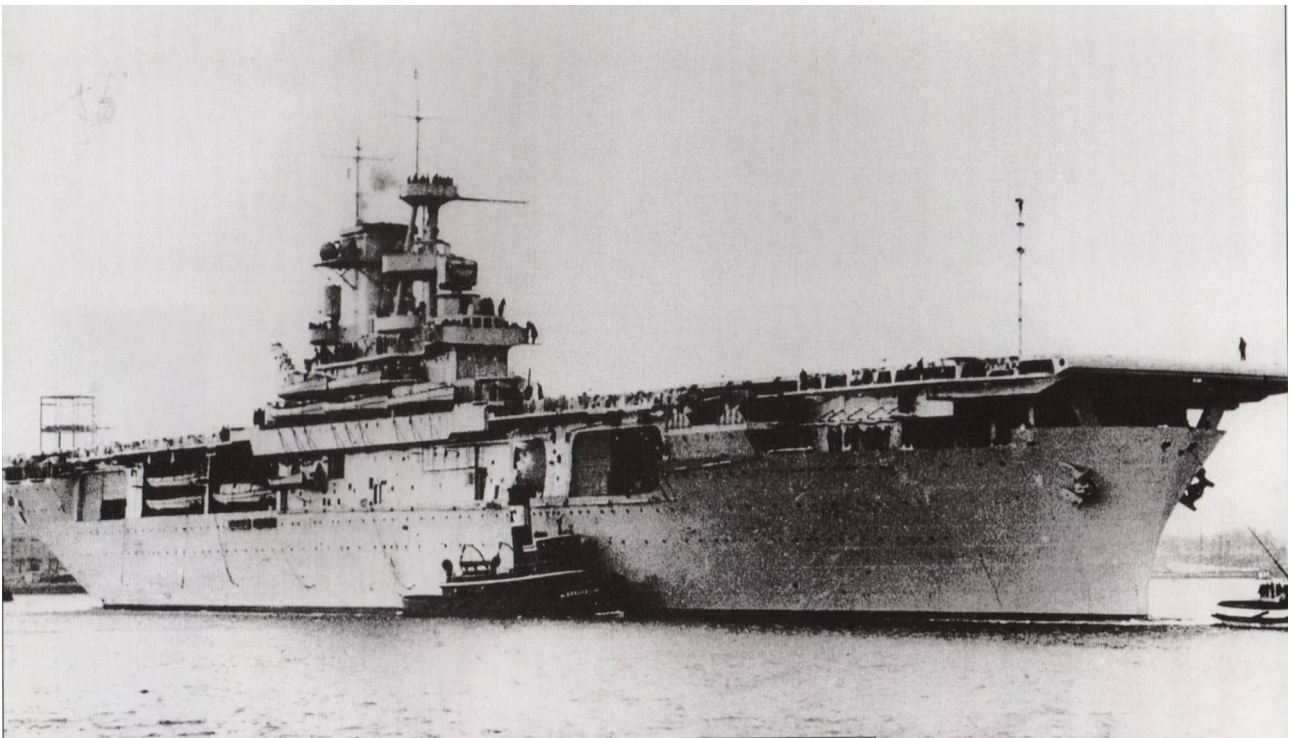


Image 6: Wasp makes her way slowly down the Weymouth Fore River. Shipyard point is visible to the left and Town River to the right.



Image 7: Taken a few moments after Image 6. The tug Luna has a line from the bow. A house on Germantown Point is visible behind the Luna.

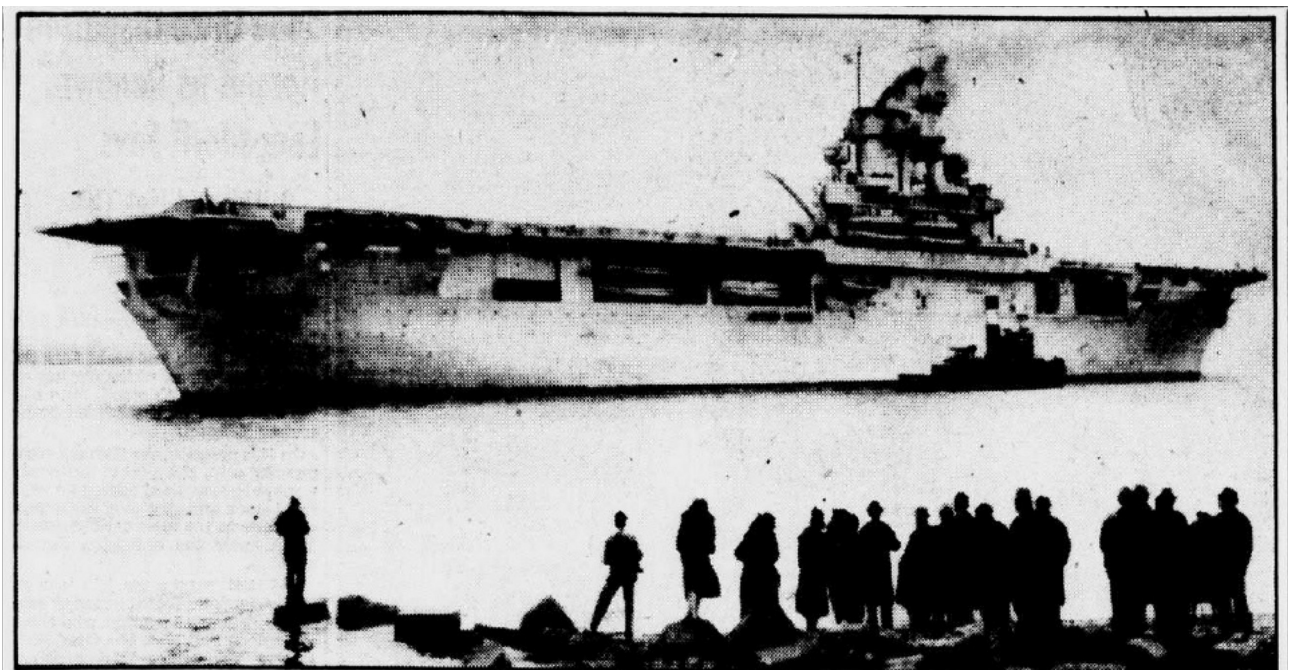


Image 8: The photo used in the Evening Star article of the 19th December shows Wasp passing Hunt Hill Point. A small crowd has gathered on the rocky groin which is still visible today.

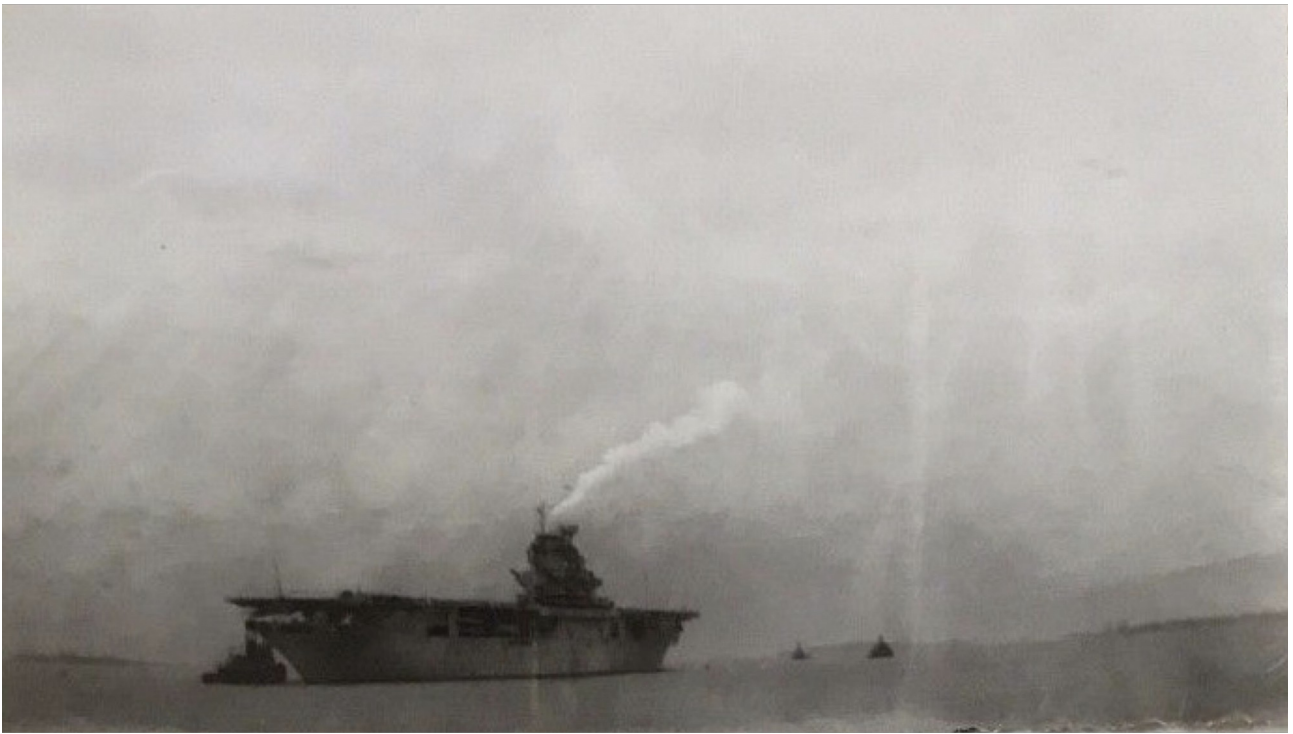


Image 9: Wasp well past Hunt Hill point and heading out to sea.

U.S.S. WASP, in a telephone conversation with Mr. Watson of the Bethlehem Steel Company, shipbuilding division, Fore River Plant, it was stated by Mr. Watson that the

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WASP on 21 December completed her full power ahead and astern trials, including the crash stop, and also the steering gear test, all of which were entirely satisfactory; also that the ship was scheduled to undertake certain economy trials on 22 December.

Image 10: An except from the Navy Bulletin of the 21st December, 1939 detailing the successful results of the trials.



Image 11: The view today from Hunt Hill Point (Google Maps)