

# THE FOG SIGNAL



I WILL NOT ABANDON YOU

LIGHTSHIP NOT IN  
CORRECT POSITION

Volume 3 Issue 9 Newsletter of The U.S. Coast Guard Lightship Sailors Association Winter 2006

## Writings of The President

Larry Ryan

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- Chris Bennett

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To My Brother Lightship Sailor Veterans, LSA Members, and Friends:

What a wonderful time we had in Portsmouth in October, if you missed it, you really missed out. We received a leather bound proclamation from the City by a military Councilman, a speaker from the serving Virginia Senator's Office that is currently Chairman of the Defense Budget, and two Commanders from the Coast Guard that spoke to us at our annual memorial service and our banquet, respectively.

We were honored to have present the son of one of the last Lightship Sailors lost in the line of duty, Nick Massey, son of Charles Massey, BMC. Chief Massey was lost overboard off The LV 101 while on Overfalls Station in January 1951.

I can assure each of you Mr. and Mrs. Massey were as honored, as were we, that we shared our experiences with them. Imagine looking into the stateroom that would have been occupied by your father on the last night of his life.

We had a very busy meeting of your Board of Directors, and a productive business meeting. One of the highlights of the Business Meeting was a change in our reunion Committee, it is now comprised of the entire Board of Directors with your President as Chairman. We now will require a simple majority of The Board to agree on all matters regarding the reunions, representing you, the General Members.

Our organization, The USCG Lightship Sailors Assoc. Inc does have a serious problem hanging over us that needs to be aired to The Members as it may effect this organization negatively in the very near future.

At the conclusion of our reunion in 2003 held in Lewes, DE, a contingent representing the Reunion Committee traveled to Portsmouth by invitation of the Renaissance Hotel to make plans for the 2005 reunion. Approximately 60 days later one of these members signed a six ( 6 ) page contract with the hotel committing The LSA to 120 rooms per night for 3 nights ( 360 room nights in hotel speak ). None of the 2003 reunion Committee representatives nor any of your current officers have acknowledged any information relating to this contract. I was made aware of "an agreement" in early September, but no copy or details.

The contract is not negotiable, we either rent the rooms or we pay for these rooms. For our 2005 Reunion stay, we have received credit for 111 room nights, leaving an unpaid balance of 249 room nights, a net balance due of \$13,929.30.

As this goes to press we are in danger of being forced out of existence for non payment of this invoice. As I'm sure you realize, we just simply don't have anywhere near this sort of cash in the bank.

This is a most serious situation, we are in danger of being forced out of existence by the Renaissance Hotel, and our legal advisors have given us very little encouragement.

In the event we can not resolve this issue, there is a risk that the 2006 Reunion may, I repeat, May be cancelled.

Anyone that has a rich uncle, or knows a good attorney, please let me know.

Our anchor is holding for now,  
Fair Winds

Larry Ryan, President  
719-440-7280 or Email Lryan8@aol.com

# A Message About Membership

Jay McCarthy Chairman

To All Hands,

## **MEMBERSHIP ... Second Annual Dues Renewal Notice ...**

It's hard to believe that a year has passed since the mailing of our first ever *Annual Dues Renewal Notice*. Many members responded to that mailing with their dues payments, and quite a few were most generous in sending in donations to be applied either to our general fund or to Lightship Preservation. Thank you for your most appreciated generosity. *As we all know, the Mission Statement for the Lightship Sailors Association, Inc. is to preserve Lightship History and Lightships.* Dues renewal has a very intricate part in helping to uphold this *Mission Statement*, and to assist in keeping this organization alive and functioning. Expenses (just like at home) keep increasing, and we need everyone to do their part. From each \$25.00 Dues paid, \$5.00 is dedicated to Lightship Preservation

In order to continue our improvements and make the LSA more open to all Dues paying members. We have made some changes for 2006.

Regular and Associate Member categories have been eliminated. Replaced by USCG Lightship Veteran (this will help us to identify on our Roster, which Military Discharged USCG Veteran was assigned duty on a USCG Lightship) and LSA Member. Both categories will pay the same \$25.00 dues and share equal responsibilities. This includes having the opportunity to attend and be heard at all meeting, vote on all matters that come before the general membership, be part of a committee, in addition can be nominated and voted onto a Board of Directors position. There will be NO distinction between the two categories other than their titles.

A 2006 Dues Renewal Notice Form is attached. Please take a few moments to fill out the form completely. This will enable us to update our records with all your current information. If you move during the year, please include us on your US Mail "Address Changed" Forms. Please print, so we don't make any mistakes.

45 members have paid their 2006 dues early. For these 45 members, please disregard this notice. If your not sure if you have already paid your 2006 dues, please drop me a line (e-mail / US Mail), or call me. I'll be most happy to check our 2006 dues payments records for you.

Payment may be made to the "USCG Lightship Sailors Association, Inc.," by either check or money order. Please mail in your payment, and completed form, to the address shown on the form.

Upon receipt of your DUES payment, we will mail out to you, a Membership card signifying that your 2006 dues are paid. This card can be used for your 2006 Income Tax return, as the DUES are Tax Deductible. The Lightship Sailors Association, Inc., is a "not for profit" organization

We had a problem in getting our 2005 Membership Cards out in a timely fashion. We do apologize, and thank you for your patience. That problem has been corrected.

## LIGHTSHIP TRIVIA

Can you name the Lightship Station that had loss of life due to an Indian attack?

The date was June 26, 1837 and the Lightship was FLORIDA, who was serving duty on Carysford Reef. Four men from the ship, engaged in "wooding" six miles from the ship, were attacked by Indians that were hidden behind casks on the shore. Captain Whalton and one other man were killed, and two escaped slightly wounded. These wounded men notified Stephen Pleasanton, ESQ and Fifth Auditor of the Captains demise. Fearing for the safety of the ships crew of three and the Captains family aboard the ship, Captain Watlington of Sand Key Light agreed to Captain the Lightship. Mr. Pleasanton requested guidance on paying Mr. Watlington for both a Lighthouse Keeper and as Captain of the Lightship. It was noted that Indian fires were seen in the vicinity for several nights prior to this attack.

Fog Signal

**USCG LIGHTSHIP SAILORS ASSOCIATION, Inc.  
2006 MEMBERSHIP DUES RENEWAL FORM**

In order to help keep our records updated and current, please take a moment to fill out this form. (please print)

Last Name:	First Name:	Middle, Initial or Nick Name:
Street Address:	City:	State:
APO or Address outside USA:		ZIP:
Telephone Number:	E mail Address:	Year Born: (optional)

**USCG Lightship Sailor Veterans** Please fill in below: **DUES: \$25.00**

Lightship Name	Hull #	LS Service Dates (From - To)	Your Rank/Rate: (optional)	Commanding Officer:
Lightship Name	Hull #	LS Service Dates (From - To)	Your Rank/Rate: (optional)	Commanding Officer:
Lightship Name	Hull #	LS Service Dates (From - To)	Your Rank/Rate: (optional)	Commanding Officer:
Association with any similar groups:			Other Info:	

**LSA MEMBER** Please fill in as it applies to you: **DUES: \$25.00**

Interest in Lightships:	Other C. G. Assignment's	Family / Friend:	Association with any similar groups, Etc.:
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*Submit any additional information you may wish, on the back of this form, or on a separate piece of paper.*

Please enclose this form with your \$25.00 check or money order, made out to the:

**“USCG LIGHTSHIP SAILORS ASSOCIATION, Inc.”**

Please mail to: Jay McCarthy

LSA – Membership

15276 Lake Wisteria Road

Delray Beach, FL 33484-4651

Thank you,  
**Jay McCarthy**  
Membership Director



### What's all the buzz about!

Ok, I know, some of you have seen this article in other issues of the FOG SIGNAL, however many of you have not. So here it is again. Let me explain. This newsletter goes out to just over six hundred people at this moment, and since this package was put together, fewer than twenty five people have requested it. This package is seventeen pages long, and supports your claim of hearing loss or Tinnitus which is a ringing in your ears. If you stood watch on the Bridge, or in an engine room, the odds are you suffer from this problem and *don't even know it*. If you want to know if you have this condition, obviously you would need a hearing test. However you can hear that ringing in your ears in a totally quiet setting like late at night when everyone else is asleep. I can hear mine as I write this, and it is not totally quiet. Tinnitus is a high pitched "whine" in your ears. Most people have had it so long it appears as normal so you don't think of it as a problem. But those around you know something is wrong. The television and radio needs to be a bit louder when you are listening to your favorite programs. It's too loud for your family and just right for you. Ask your family.

Perhaps your already diagnosed with a hearing problem, and your wearing hearing aids now. Those little buggers are expensive aren't they, and from time to time they need to be replaced. If the VA agrees that you have a hearing problem they need to cover, those hearing aids are free. Of all the members I have spoken with that had EXISTING hearing problems, not one ever thought that the origin of their hearing loss could have been caused by their Lightship duty. So, even if you are already under Doctors care for an existing hearing problem, you still need to pursue a claim with the Veterans Administration. And when you get your results back from the VA, don't accept NO from them. Appeal that right away. You should be using a representative in this entire process as stated in the hearing package, and they will appeal the decision for you. My hearing claim was originally denied, so we appealed. When all was said and done, my disability rating had gone up from 10 to 30 percent. As a military retiree receiving a pension, that extra 20 percent meant that I instantly got an additional 20 percent tax savings off my retirement pay. What that means is that the VA pays 30 percent of my retirement pay to me tax free, and the Coast Guard pays the other 70 percent that is taxable. The VA will furnish prosthetic appliances, equipment and devices, such as artificial limbs, orthopedic braces and shoes, wheelchairs, crutches and canes, to Veterans receiving VA care for any condition. The VA will provide hearing aids and eyeglasses to veterans that receive compensation for a service-connected disability. (hearing loss)

Remember that these fog horns were designed to be heard by vessel traffic from 5 miles or more away. How close were you? On the 612, these horns were powered by diaphone air compressors filling 4 huge low pressure storage tanks that expelled its entire volume of air with every blast. These tanks were then recharged and as they filled the tanks rang out with a loud ringing tone as they pressurized. They were 6 feet below forward berthing. So, using a representative to guide you through the process, you might just find out that you're a Disabled Vet. Its up to you.

Rick Bennett

For the hearing package contact me at [coasty@comcast.net](mailto:coasty@comcast.net) (508)583-3953 or 25 Keswick Road Brockton, MA 02302. Do it today! You may be glad you did.

## REUNION 2006 NEWS

Our 2006 Reunion and general Membership Meeting will be in The 13th CG District Seattle, WA, and home to the LV #83 over the first full weekend in October. October 5, 6, and 7. We will headquarter at the Best Western Executive Inn ( immediately under the space needle ) for all of our official functions except the annual memorial service, which will be on The #83. Other activities to be announced.

Please read The Writings of The President, this may change.



# A Short Sea Story

My “Dream Sheet” prior to graduation in November, 1969 with Golf 71, I asked for an 82’ Patrol craft in 13<sup>th</sup> Dist. or in Alaska. What I got was a Lightship (?) stationed out of Seattle, Wash. After my leave, my travel orders took me first to CG Base Seattle. Upon reporting to the guard shack and surrendering my orders the SN on guard duty responded, “What ship? Where? Nothing here by that name.” The following day I was sent to the Greyhound bus station for a 2-hour trip west to Port Angeles, Wash. (CG Air Station). Now what needs to be understood for a kid from Kansas City, Missouri, Seattle was as far west as one could go without getting wet. I was about to get wet. I reported to the Air Station and was told to grab the “Stagecoach” to Neah Bay, Wash. (90 Minutes West) tomorrow. Farther West. I finally arrived at CG Base Neah Bay and was amazed, this was an Indian Reservation that happened to have a CG Base. Dugout Canoes and all.

They put me on a 44’ and sent me (yes) west and OK south for 3 hours. I got a little queasy but not bad. Upon arrival to Station WLV 196 there loomed this huge RED ship with 8 foot white letters on the hull reading “UMATILLA”. It was to be my home for the next two years. The Coxswain of the 44’ came alongside in 10’ swells and ordered me to get up that ‘Jacobs Ladder” when he said, Go. “And don’t stop” he cautioned. Upon the command I indeed clamored up the ladder only to have the 44’ slam against the hull and shatter the lower two rungs of the ladder. Holy Cow!!! It was nice to be on a stable vessel finally and the queasy stomach began to subside. This lasted about two days and a whole new queasy set in for the next week. Lord, What had I gotten myself into?

Lightship duty is, for me, fondly recalled for the most part. Mid-Watch, 4 on 8 off, Plotting the Closest Point of Approach, The Fishing Fleet, Painting, Red lead, Green Death, Fenders, Underway Replenishment, Main Light, Fog Horn, Zodiac Boat, LORAN, Seagulls, “The Pit”, The North Pacific Storms, The Head, The Scuttlebutt, Deck Growlers, Deck Apes, Snipes, Monkeys Fist, Fish Plate, Freeboard, Salmon fishing, and Friday grilling on the fantail. I most fondly recall the grilling. You see, if weather permitted, the cook threw steaks on a grill made from a 55-gallon barrel cut in half. We also got our ration of 2 beers (if not on watch). During the salmon season, we boated a nice salmon and cleaned and steaked it out and tossed it, still twitching, on the grill. Lemon, Garlic, and “Oh my goodness.” I have yet to find a salmon dish to equal those days.

I spent 4 years in the USCG and 18 years with USCGR. I retired as a BMC. I still maintain contacts with several of my shipmates from “The Boat”. The second half of my active duty was served with the Boating Safety Detachment, Seattle and although good duty I did not keep in contact with any of the guys. I think shipboard duty requires one to be dependant on each other. Part of a team. Part of a fraternity. The Lightship Sailors Fraternity. And I am proud to be member.

Love the publication, Thanks for the opportunity to share my experiences.

Richard E. Carroll, Jr.  
USCGR BMC (Ret)

# Lightship of the Quarter

WLV 196



Lightship 196 in Alaska today.  
As you can see time is taking its toll  
on this fine ship.

A long way from Pollock Rip Station, MA where she was built particularly for that station. She was built in 1946, along with her sister ship the WAL 189, took station in 1947. These two vessels would herald the first of modern Lightships as designed by the USCG, and would remain the benchmark for all future Lightships. Diesel powered, all steel hull and deck houses with a breakwater on the foredeck, maintaining water tight integrity in all compartments. Common dormitory style crews quarters and two separate engine rooms, one with the main the main engine and one generator, the other with two generators and most of the air compressor equipment for the fog signals. In the #1 engine room the 196, and all future lightships was equipped with a fresh water evaporator that was intended to supply 100% of the normal water requirement. The main engine and all three 300KW generators were by General Motors. The main Engine was a model 6-278A, clutch reversing reduction gear, 500 SHP @ 250 RPM. Aids to navigation included a one of a kind duplex 500mm electric lens of 15,000 cp each, 57' above the water line and twin F2T diaphones aft the pilot house, and a hand operated bell, as built.

The WAL 196 served on Pollock Rip station through 1958, then designated Nantucket, then May 1960 she became First CG Dist Relief. As Relief she saw duty on Buzzards Bay, Pollock Rip, Portland, and Boston Stations. In 1961 she was then ordered to the 13<sup>th</sup> CG District, Seattle, WA after a refit which included a change of the main A/N light. She was equipped with 24 Locomotive Headlights arranged in groups of six ( still in place and operational in the spring of 2005 ). Command was transferred from Herman Schmidt, CWO-4 to Lt. John Wirtz, then reversing Command before taking Umatilla Station. She finished her career on Umatilla Station in September 30, 1971 and then decommissioned.

Arguably, this may have made the 196 a record holder of the total number of stations covered and probably the longest traveled of any Lightship under The USCG.

Between 1971 and 1980 she was sold to an organization known as 'Marine Bio Researchers'. They made no changes in the structure or design, after painting the ship with a poor grade of white paint ( right over the red ) now peeling leaving the appearance of an old rust bucket, literally abandoning her in Seattle with the bunks made and food in the dry stores and galley and coffee in the pot and cups, still there today.

She was acquired by the present owner and towed to Alaska to serve as a floating log camp at the hundreds of small uninhabited islands. Immediately after arriving in Alaska, the logging business ceased to be viable and has been tied to pilings ever since. After almost 20 years, May 2005, she has only minimal water in the bilges, all original equipment except the evaporators are in place. In this authors opinion, she probably the nearest to the original of any existing Lightship. The 196 served with distinction on some of the toughest stations, providing a guiding light and sanctuary to many Lightship Sailors.

Well Done, Good and Faithful Servant

My gratitude to owner, Jim Taro, my host Tom Lecompt and Pat Jirschele for a day not to be forgotten, and to former 196 Lightship Sailors Herman Schmidt, Gene Ringo, Adrian Van Houten and Rich Carols for their stories and pictures.

## Meet your Treasurer FRED PELGER

This past reunion, Fred Pelger was accepted officially as our Treasurer, relieving John Hughes who could no longer fill the position.

Fred enlisted in Coast Guard June of 1956. His permanent duty stations were: "Columbia" during 1957, Storekeeper School in Groton during the last part of 1957 and first part of 1958. Air Station in Port Angeles, WA from 1958 until discharge June of 1960.

Fred met his wife Rexina in Port Angeles. They returned to Arizona and spent his working years in Banking and Sales. Fred and Rexina have two sons, one daughter, and three grandsons.

The Board of Directors extend a warm Welcome aboard to the Pelger's, and a thank you for past and future work for Lightship Sailors



# Lightship Sailors of the Quarter



Herman Schmidt on the deck of the 196

## LIGHTSHIP SAILOR (S ) OF THE QUARTER

Your editor and Publisher have chosen to deviate a bit for this article, instead of a single LIGHTSHIP SAILOR OF THE QUARTER, We have chosen two. Since they served together, made the trip around from Boston to Seattle together, and one from the deck, one from the engine room.

Herman Schmidt, CWO-4 US Coast Guard, Ret, and  
Gene C. Ringo, ENCM US Coast Guard, Ret.

Mr. Schmidt assumed Command while on Nantucket Station, serving as skipper on all the 1<sup>st</sup> CG Dist Stations as listed in the 196 story, then again as skipper on Umatilla Station, WA.

Chief Ringo joined the crew for the trip around, serving under three skippers including Mr. Schmidt, J.A. Kalczynski, CBO SN, and Rex Cohlson, CWO-1, a period from July, 1961 till March, 1964.

Mr. Schmidt makes his home in Delaware, while Chief Ringo makes his in Vancouver, Washington.

Your Board of Directors wish to extend our thanks for the responses to this article, particularly for all the pictures and your stories. We wish we had room to print them all, please see the website for more [www.uscgLightshipsailors.org](http://www.uscgLightshipsailors.org)



Chief Ringo enjoying a cup of coffee in the wardroom.

## SHIPS STORE

Items for sale in our SHIPS STORE

The following items are available for purchase in the Ship's Store. If you are interested in any item (s) please contact Larry Ryan, Jay McCarthy, Rick Bennett or Fred Pelger with your request. Please send your check, made payable to The USCG Lightship Sailors Assn., and mail it to Fred Pelger.

- Windbreaker lined jacket \$45.00
- Ball Caps \$15.00 solid back or mesh
- Pens \$1.50 Note pads \$.75
- LSA Collar pins \$10.00 per set
- U. S. Lighthouse replica pin \$10.00
- Nantucket Lightship Pins \$5.00



- All patches \$5.00 by reunion name
- Quincy, Massachusetts
  - Baltimore, Maryland
  - Port Huron, Michigan
  - New Bedford, Massachusetts (memorial dedication)
  - Lewes, Delaware
  - Astoria, Oregon
  - Portsmouth, Virginia
  - USCG Lightship Sailors Memorial

**UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**



"I DO SOLEMNLY SWEAR  
(OR AFFIRM) THAT I WILL  
SUPPORT AND DEFEND THE  
CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED  
STATES AGAINST ALL ENEMIES,  
FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC; THAT  
I WILL BEAR TRUE FAITH AND  
ALLEGIANCE TO THE SAME;  
AND THAT I WILL OBEY THE  
ORDERS OF THE PRESIDENT OF  
THE UNITED STATES AND THE  
ORDERS OF THE OFFICERS  
APPOINTED OVER ME,  
ACCORDING TO REGULATIONS  
AND THE UNIFORM CODE OF  
MILITARY JUSTICE.  
SO HELP ME GOD."

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# VETERANS AFFAIRS

Bernie Byrnes Chairman

The VA has been found to be 15% wrong in initial claims decisions by the I.G., we could have told them that. Therefore do not despair if you have been denied the 1st go around and if this is the case take the following steps:

1. Ask for a DRO (Decision Review Officer) opinion, this is done by a senior VA employee and in about 60% of the cases they will over turn the decision in your favor.

2. The next step is an appeal, this usually takes up to a year, reason being it goes to Washington, D.C.

3. I have mentioned before that your best bet is to go through a Service Officer, I would suggest D.A.V. The reason is they will be looking out for you and also when they review your service medical records they might pick up a disability that you over looked.

4. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions at [fridell@galaxy.net](mailto:fridell@galaxy.net) and let me know the following: telephone, and if you have an existing service connected disability. The reason is that there is very little paperwork on your end as opposed to an initial claim.

5. If you do not have a computer my address is: 32 Sexton Ave, Westwood, MA 02090-2821, Tel: 781-762-2348.

6. Hang in there and \*if the VA asks for additional info send them anything relating to your claim (its just a way of stalling as most Regional Offices are way behind.)

Good Luck and remember this applies to any sort of disability of course Tinnitus and Hearing Loss along with Asbestosis are the most applicable for us Lightship Sailors.

Bernie Byrnes

## Answers to last editions crossword puzzle

### Across

2. PIPE—Boswains
3. HISTORIAN—SCOTT PRICE
5. FOOD—CHOW
6. COFFEE—LIQUID GOLD AT MIDNIGHT
9. WAKE—TRAIL
11. NEW ORLEANS—SOUTHERN LIGHTSHIP( TWO WORDS)
14. TEXAS TOWER—REPLACE LIGHTSHIP (TWO WORDS)
15. SEXTANT—NAVIGATION TOOL

### Down

1. LIGHTHOUSE—OPPOSITE OF LIGHTSHIP
4. COMMANDANT—Big Boss
7. SCREW—PROP
8. NANTUCKET—NE Lightship
10. HOMEPORT—SHIPS HOME
12. COAL—OLD FUEL
13. REUNION—GET TO GETHER



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Volume 3 Issue 9 Newsletter of The U.S. Coast Guard Lightship Sailors Association Winter  
2006

**Larry Ryan Publisher**  
**3813 Nuevo Circle**  
**Colorado Springs**  
**Colorado 80918**

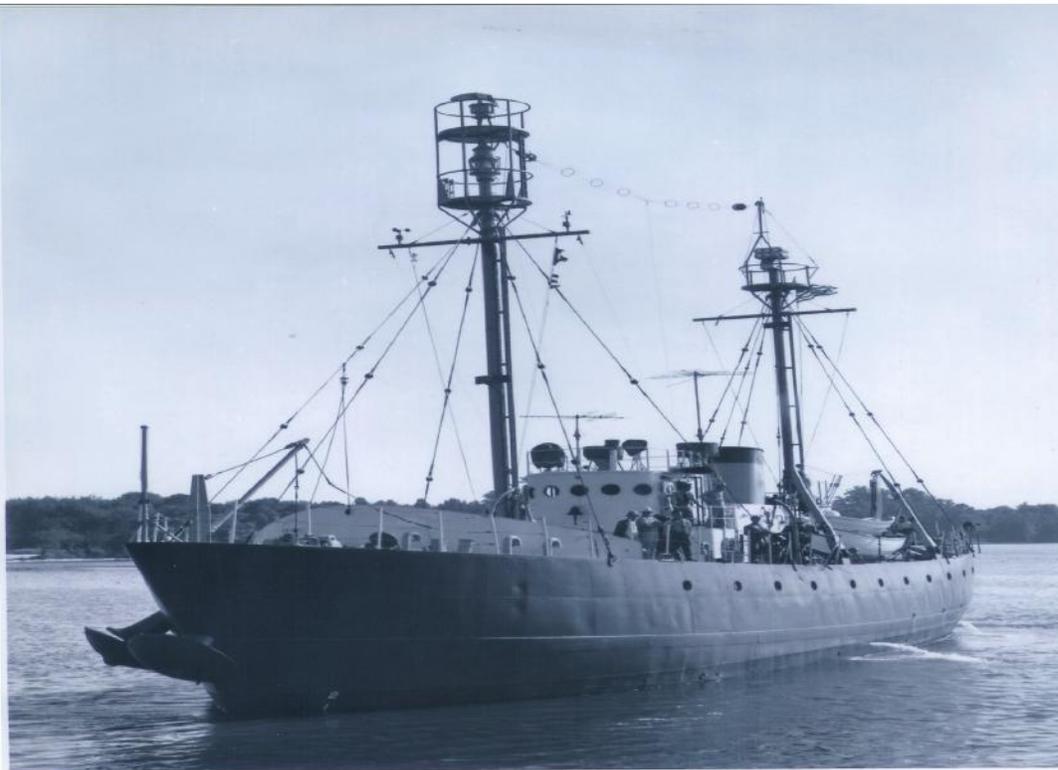
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*United States Coast Guard  
Lightship Preservation*



WAL-196 seen on it's "shake down" cruise prior to making the East coast to West coast trip.