



## *Kukui*, 1946

AK-174; WAK-186  
*ex-Colquitt*

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A nut-bearing tree, *Aleurites moluccana*, native to Hawaii, Polynesia and South Seas Islands, Malaysia, the Malay Peninsula, and the Philippines. It is the state tree of Hawaii.

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Builder: Froeming Brothers, Inc., Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Length: 338' 9"

Beam: 50' 4"

Draft: 17' 3"

Displacement: 5,650 tons

Cost: ??

Commissioned: 1945 (commercial); August 1945 (USN); March 1946 (USCG)

Decommissioned: 29 February 1972

Disposition: Transferred to the Philippines

Class: Maritime Commission C1-M-AV1 type

Machinery: 1 x Nordberg diesel; 1,700 bhp; single propeller

Performance & Endurance:

Max: 10.6 knots; 24,273 mile range

Economic: 8.0 knots; 25,230 mile range

Deck Gear: 8 ton boom capacity

Complement: 112 (1950); 51 (1966)

Armament: None

Electronics:

Detection Radar: SO-4 (1950); SPS-23 (1966)

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### **Cutter History:**

The United States Coast Guard Cutter *Kukui* began her life as a Maritime Commission type C1-M-AV1 freighter that was launched in the spring of 1945. She was acquired by the Navy on 17 August 1945 and she was commissioned as U.S.S. *Colquitt* (AK-174) on 22 September 1945 under the command of LCDR F. E. Miner, USCG. *Colquitt* was transferred to the Coast Guard two days later and served until she was decommissioned on 11 March 1946, on which date her transfer to the Coast Guard became permanent. The Coast Guard at that time needed a large cargo vessel to supply the equipment and personnel needed for the construction and logistical support of the Pacific LORAN chain. Her name was changed to *Kukui*, a name taken from a buoy tender that had just been decommissioned, and was given the designation WAK-186. She was converted to Coast Guard specifications at the Coast Guard Yard in Curtis Bay, Maryland. During her Coast Guard career she was based out of Honolulu, Hawaii.

Through 1960 she was responsible for constructing the entire Philippine LORAN system. All construction of this system was done by sailors of the *Kukui*. Their dual role as seamen and construction workers was one of the most unique assignments in the armed forces. She carried on her decks two LCMs to ferry men and equipment to shore and also had three bulldozers, several trucks and a few jeeps stashed in her holds.

Seven months a year she was underway providing necessary logistic support to members of the Coast Guard LORAN chain throughout the western Pacific. During this time she delivered "everything from toothpicks to antenna poles; from a can of pepper to a quonset hut." She also carried the complex electronic equipment necessary to set up the LORAN system. As a Coast Guard public affairs release noted: "The men and officers of the black-hulled cutter were a versatile group. They not only sailed the ship but they operated bulldozers, landing craft, trucks and jeeps."

A typical voyage would cover over 18,000 nautical miles and the *Kukui* would deliver 2,500,000 tons of cargo to the many Coast Guard operated LORAN stations throughout the western Pacific. In all she would make over 20 stops at various stations and ports, including Yokosuka, Japan and Manila Harbor in the Republic of the Philippines.

On 15 June 1953 she rendered medical assistance to a civilian workman injured at Batan LORAN station. In 1957 the crew of the *Kukui* observed a lack of books

in the Philippine school districts they visited. The following year they got up a collection of 400 books to give to needy schoolchildren. Through hard work and perseverance they increased the total to 45,000 books within the next three years. She also delivered relief supplies to the island of Batan after it was hit by Typhoon Elane.

On December 1, 1969, French Frigate Shoals LORAN Station was hit by a tidal wave, forcing the crew to evacuate and destroying much of the station. The *Kukui* was sent to the island the following month and was responsible for her reconstruction and rehabilitation. On 24 June 1970 she collided with the M/V *Myoriki Maru No. 25* six miles from Yokosuka, Japan, with both vessels receiving minor damage.

In January of 1972, the *Kukui* received word that as part of a move to reduce Coast Guard spending, she would be decommissioned. She later received word that upon her decommissioning in Honolulu on March 1, 1972, she would be turned over to the Navy who in turn would give her to the Philippine Navy.

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[Click here](#) to access *Kukui's* 1948 LORAN chain resupply cruise report.

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"CGC Kukui - WAK-186 (ex Colquitt AK-174) C. G. YARD, Curtis Bay, Maryland."; 16 March 1946; Photo No. #19; photo by D. Kendall.



"THE USCGC KUKUI (WAK-186): The KUKUI, anchored at Saipan, loads cargo for Coast Guard Loran Stations in the Southwest Pacific. The KUKUI, a cargo ship, is a floating storehouse. She makes one whale of a cruise that lasts nearly a year and covers over 20,000 miles. Her job is to service loran stations, those vital electronic navigational aids to ships and planes maintained by the U.S. Coast Guard in the Southwest Pacific. Like Christmas, the KUKUI comes but once a year. So, her arrival is anticipated with considerable eagerness by the Coast Guardsmen stationed on an isolated atoll in the Pacific. The KUKUI's arrival means supplies -- anything from a toothpick to an antenna pole -- from a can of sardines to a quonset hut. Her ports of call include, the Marshalls, the Marianas, the Philippines, Guam, Yokohama, and Hong Kong. Her home port -- Honolulu, T.H."; For Release 26 February 1949; Photo No. 5316; photographer unknown.



USCGC *Kukui*

No caption/date/photo number; photographer unknown.



"USCGC Kukui (WAK-186)."; 1970; Photo No. 14CGD-010870 08; photographer unknown.

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