



POINT THATCHER, 1961

WPB 82314

Builder: Coast Guard Yard, Curtis Bay, MD

Commissioned: 13 September 1961

Decommissioned: 13 March 1992

Disposition: Artificial reef

Length: 82'10" oa, 78' bp

Navigation Draft: 5'11" max (1960)

Beam: 17'7" max

Displacement: 69 tons fl; 60 light

Main Engines: 2 gas turbines and controllable-pitch propellers (see class history)

BHP: 2,000

Performance, Maximum Sustained: 22.9 knots (1963)

Performance, Economic: 9.4 knots

Fuel Capacity: 1,840 gal

Complement: 8 men (1960), 2 officers, 8 men (1965)

Electronics:

Radar: SPN-11, CR-103 (1960), or SPS-64

Armament: 1 x 20mm (1960), 5 x .50 cal mg, 1 x 81 mm mortar (Vietnam service)

Class history—The 82-foot patrol boats have mild steel hulls and aluminum superstructures. Longitudinally framed construction was used to save weight.

These boats were completed with a variety of power plants. 82301 through 82313, 82315 through 82317, and 82319 through 82331 were powered by two Cummins 600-hp diesels. Boats 82318 and 82332 through 82379 received two Cummins 800-hp diesels. The 82314 was fitted with two 1,000-hp gas turbines and controllable-pitch propellers. The purpose of this installation was to permit the service to evaluate the propulsion equipment. All units were eventually fitted with the 800-hp diesels. Units remaining in 1990 were re-equipped with Caterpillar diesels.

WPB 82301 through 82344 were commissioned without names; at that time the Coast Guard did not name patrol craft shorter than 100 feet. In January 1964 they were assigned names.

Cutter history:

The *Point Thatcher* was stationed at Miami Beach, FL, from 1961 to 1963. She was used for law enforcement and search and rescue operations.

She was stationed at Norfolk, VA, in 1964 and 1965. On 16 June 1965, she stood by the Norwegian M/V *Blue Master* and USS *Hartley* following a collision off Cape Henry. On 24 July 1965, she escorted F/V *Explorer* with casualties on board to Little Creek, VA.

From 1966 to early March of 1971, she was again stationed at Miami Beach, FL. On 19 February 1966, she transported 16 Cuban refugees from Gun Cay, Bahamas, to Miami, FL. On 4 October 1966, she grounded, holed, and had to be abandoned off Miami Beach, while going to the rescue of the grounded M/V *Transporter*, which eventually managed to free herself. The *Point Thatcher* was refloated and towed to Miami Beach on 9 October. On 28 March 1967, she embarked seven Cuban stowaways from M/V *Amfialia* and delivered them to Key West, FL. On 31 May 1970, she refueled and escorted a distressed 18-foot pleasure craft to Miami.

From March, 1971 to 1984, she was stationed at Sarasota, FL. On 28 December 1977, she seized the vessel *Marania* carrying contraband.

From 1985 on, she was stationed at Nokomis, FL. On 7 May 1985, she rescued three from a raft in the Gulf of Mexico. On 2 and 3 March 1987, she towed the disabled F/V *Beach King* 225 miles south of Mobile, AL, to St. Petersburg, FL, during a storm. On 7 and 8 March 1987, she towed the disabled F/V *Miss Ann* and the pleasure craft *Grenada II* to Fort Myers, FL, in 18-foot seas.

She was transferred to Gulfport, Mississippi in August, 1990, joining the CGC *Point Estero* and replacing the CGC *Acushnet*. One of her primary missions was law enforcement and by this time the *Point Thatcher* had a record of 14 major drug arrests in coastal waters.

She was decommissioned on 13 March 1992 and was used as a training hulk at Cape May. In the spring of 2000 she was sunk as an artificial reef off Ocean City, Maryland.

Sources:

Cutter History File. USCG Historian's Office, USCG HQ, Washington, D.C.

"The 82-Foot Class Patrol Boat." *U.S. Coast Guard Engineer's Digest* No. 133 (Mar-Apr 1962), pp. 2-5.

Robert Scheina. *U.S. Coast Guard Cutters & Craft, 1946-1990*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1990

