



Poplar, 1939

WAGL-241

Any of several fast-growing deciduous trees of the genus *Populus* having unisexual flowers borne in catkins.

Call Sign: N R X N

Builder: Dubuque Boat & Boiler Works, Dubuque, Iowa

Length: 103' 6"

Beam: 24'

Draft: 4' 2" max

Displacement: 193 tons

Cost: \$123,200

Commissioned: 1939

Decommissioned: 17 June 1973

Disposition: Transferred

Machinery: 2 Fairbanks-Morse 150-HP diesel engines; twin propellers

Performance & Endurance:

Max: 13.0 knots

Cruising:

Economical: 12.0 knots; 1,432 mile range

Deck Gear: Steel boom, 2-1/2 ton capacity; electric hoist; two spuds.

Complement: 17

Armament: None

Electronics: CCNO-N-173-B1 radar

History:

Poplar was built as a tender for the Lighthouse Service at Dubuque, Iowa and launched in 1939. She was one of two *Goldenrod*-class river tenders, the other being *Goldenrod*. These 104-foot river tenders were constructed of steel except for the top of the pilot house and Texas deck, which were wood. Their propellers were mounted in tunnels for operations in shallow waters, the first tenders so equipped. In the early 1960s, she and her sister, *Goldenrod* (WAGL-213) received new engines, 2 General Motors diesels, as replacements for the Fairbanks-Morse they were originally equipped with. They were designed to push a work barge ahead of them.

Upon completion *Poplar* assumed tender duties out of her permanent station at St. Louis, Missouri. She serviced navigational aids along the Mississippi River in the region of St. Louis, which is ten miles below the confluence of the Missouri with the Mississippi.

Tender *Poplar* transferred to the Coast Guard in 1939 when the Lighthouse Service became part of that service. She remained in active status as a Coast Guard river buoy tender until 1 November 1941, when Executive Order 8929 transferred the Coast Guard to the Navy. *Poplar* served as a buoy tender on naval service until 1 January 1946, when she returned to the Treasury Department. She ordinarily operated out of St. Louis until 1963. She was responsible for maintaining aids to navigation on 276 miles of the Lower Mississippi River to Boonville, Missouri. She was also responsible for maintaining AtoN on the Illinois River to Mile 80. On 27 January 1955 she assisted in fighting a fire aboard a Federal Barge Lines barge that was moored at the East Saint Louis Terminal. She transferred to Sewickley, on the Ohio River twelve miles west-northwest of Pittsburgh as of 15 May 1963.

In April 1967, after 177 years with the Treasury Department, the Coast Guard

transferred to the new Department of Transportation. Through her decommissioning in 1973, *Poplar* continued in active service as a 104' WLR class large river buoy tender, servicing Ohio River navigational aids out of Sewickley. She was decommissioned on 26 September 1973 and was transferred, as was *Goldenrod*, to the National Science Foundation.

Commanding Officers / Officers in Charge / Dates of Service (if known):

CHBOSN N. A. Cooper, ?-1946
CHBOSN J. M. Lambert, ?-1956
BMC Alfred L. Bridges, ?
BOSN Karl M. Ashby, ?-1957
BOSN E. Bolinger, ?
CHBOSN K. M. Ashby, ?-1963
CHBOSN C. R. Wattam, Jr., 1963-1966
BMC John C. Kietter, 1963-1966
CHBOSN W-2 Richard R. Terhune, 1966
CHBOSN W-2 (later-LT) L. De Bernardi, 1966-1968
CWO2 Carl Nucilli, 1968-

Sources:

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

Douglas Peterson. *United States Lighthouse Service Tenders, 1840-1939*. Annapolis: Eastwind Publishing, 2000.

Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships. Washington, DC: USGPO.

Robert Scheina. *U.S. Coast Guard Cutters & Craft of World War II*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1982.

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