



General Putnam, 1865

A Navy name retained.

Builder: Brooklyn, New York

Length: 120'

Beam: 22'

Draft: 5' 6"

Displacement: 149 tons (1865)

Cost: \$8,000 (purchase price); \$9,450 (alterations)

Commissioned: 1857 (private); September, 1861 (USN); 1865 (USLHS)

Decommissioned: 28 September 1891

Disposition: Sold

Machinery: Single-acting steam engine; coal-fired boilers; 176 BHP; side paddle wheels

Performance & Endurance:

Max:

Cruising:

Deck Gear:

Complement:

Armament:

Tender History:

USS *General Putnam*, a 149-ton tug, was built in 1857 at Brooklyn, New York, as the civilian tug *William G. Putnam*. She was purchased by the Navy in July 1861 and placed in commission in mid-September under the name *General Putnam*. Assigned to what soon became the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, she mainly served in North Carolina waters for the next year. During this time the tug helped in sinking blockships to restrict Confederate blockading efforts, took part in the February 1862 capture of Roanoke Island, and assisted in expanding Federal control of the North Carolina Sounds.

In November 1862 *General Putnam* was transferred to the Hampton Roads area and the rivers tributary to Chesapeake Bay. For the rest of 1862 and much of 1863 she was primarily stationed on the York River and in 1864 moved to the James. Her duties included protecting Yorktown and other Union-held positions, clearing mines, enforcing the blockade, covering landings of Federal troops and engaging enemy forces ashore. In May 1865, after fighting had ended in Virginia, *General Putnam* went to Washington, D.C., where she was decommissioned early in June.

She was sold to the Treasury Department for \$8,000 on 2 June 1865. She was assigned to the 3rd Lighthouse District. She was rammed and sunk by the SS Major Reybold in November of 1867 after being transferred to the 2nd Lighthouse District. She was raised in July of 1868 and repaired at Wilmington, Delaware and was then reassigned to the 3rd Lighthouse District.

Her name was shortened to simply *Putnam* in 1869. She was rebuilt and lengthened to 120 feet in 1877. She transferred back to the 2nd District in June of 1883. She was overhauled in 1880 at New York and was completely rebuilt in 1889. In March of 1891 she was transferred to the 7th Lighthouse District and was based out of Key West, Florida.

She was laid up in 1891 and sold in 1893.

Sources:

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

