



Red Wood, 1964

WLM-685

A very tall evergreen tree, *Sequoia sempervirens*, of coastal and northern California.

Builder: Coast Guard Yard, Curtis Bay, Maryland

Length: 157'

Beam: 31'

Draft: 7'

Displacement: 525 tons

Cost: \$2,779,624

Commissioned: 4 August 1964

Decommissioned: 30 June 1999

Disposition: Transferred to Argentina

Machinery: 2 Caterpillar diesels; 1,800 SHP; twin propellers

Performance & Endurance:

Max: 13 knots (1964)

Cruising: 11 knots; 3,000 mile range

Deck Gear: 10-ton boom capacity

Complement: 32 (1964); 37 (1996)

Armament: Small arms only

Electronics:

Tender History:

The *Red Wood* was the first of five 157-foot coastal buoy tenders built by the Coast Guard Yard that entered service between 1964 and 1971. They were the first new class of seagoing buoy tenders of the post-World War II era that were designed and constructed by the Coast Guard. This class of tender was designed to service aids to navigation up to 10-tons and, with a draft of only seven feet, to operate in shallow waters often encountered on the sides of dredged harbor channels. They were designed with low bows that allowed maximum visibility around approaching buoys and had a bow thruster unit recessed into their hulls and twin controllable-pitch propellers to increase maneuverability. Their hulls were reinforced for light icebreaking. The conventional ship's wheel was absent, being replaced by a simple tiller. The hydraulic steering system provided a change from full left to full right rudder in six seconds. Steering and engine control stations were located on each bridge wing in addition to the pilothouse station. One press release stated that the crew ". . . would enjoy a new concept in comfort provided by their modernistic living quarters. All living spaces are air conditioned, paneled in maintenance-free plastic laminates and finished in bright colors." All weight handling gear was operated by hydraulic motors utilizing an advanced pneumatic control system. The boom was controlled from either of two enclosed air-conditioned stations built into the superstructure just below the bridge deck level. Each tender was assigned to tend aids to navigation in coastal waters while being "always ready" to carry out other traditional Coast Guard duties such as fighting fires and conducting law enforcement, environmental protection and search and rescue operations when required.

Red Wood's keel was laid on 1 July 1963 and she was christened by Ruth B. Garmatz, the wife of Maryland Congressman Edward A. Garmatz, and launched on 4 April 1964. She was commissioned on 4 August 1964 under the command of LCDR Samuel M. Moore, III, USCG. She was assigned to the Coast Guard Depot at New London, Connecticut, replacing the tender *Hawthorn*, and was placed under the operational control of the First Coast Guard District. Her area of responsibility extended from Watch Hill, Rhode Island to Execution Rocks at the beginning of the East River where she serviced 260 aids to navigation and provided logistical services to the lighthouses in Long Island Sound and surrounding waters. For support she was assigned the Aids to Navigation Team [ANT] REDWOOD, which utilized a 46-foot BUSL.

Red Wood's other assigned duties included search and rescue standby, lighthouse maintenance, lending assistance to various government organizations for experimental work, enforcing recreational boating safety, and maintaining travel and commerce on the Connecticut and Thames Rivers by breaking ice during the winter months. On 25 August 1965 she assisted the cutter *Owasco* off Little Goshen Reef. On 2 February 1975 she recovered the wreckage of a jet

helicopter with the deceased pilot still inside which had crashed in Long Island Sound off Milford, Connecticut.

She transferred to Philadelphia in March of 1996 where she replaced her sister tender, the decommissioned *Red Oak*. The *Red Wood* herself was decommissioned on 30 June 1999 and transferred to Argentina.

Sources:

J. Lee Cox, Jr. "Historical Context and Statement of Significance: USCGC *Red Beech* (WLM-686)." Report submitted to USCG, Dolan Research, Philadelphia, PA, 1997.

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

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

