



Lilac, 1933

WAGL / WLM-227

Lilac: a shrub found in Europe and North America noted for its large panicles of fragrant pink-purple flowers.

Builder: Pusey & Jones Company, Wilmington, Delaware

Length: 173' 4"

Beam: 34'

Draft: 11'

Displacement: 799 tons (fl)

Cost: \$334,900

Launched: 26 May 1933

Commissioned: 1933

Decommissioned: 3 February 1972

Disposition: Donated on 6 June 1972

Machinery: 2 triple-expansion steam engines fired by 2 Babcock & Wilcox watertube boilers; 1,000 SHP; twin propellers

Performance: 11.0 knots (maximum); 1,734 nm range @ 10.0 knots

Deck Gear: 20-ton boom capacity; hoist was steam powered

Complement: 38

Electronics: SPN-11 radar; UNQ-1 sonar (1961)

Armament: 1 x 3"/50; 2 x 20mm/80 single mount; 2 depth charge tracks (WWII); no armament during other periods.

History:

The Lighthouse Service originally contracted the *Lilac* on 13 April 1931 to Hampton Roads Shipbuilding of Portsmouth, Virginia. She was designed as a coastwise tender and was to be named the *Azalea*. Pusey & Jones Company underbid Hampton Roads Shipbuilding, however, and the former was awarded the contract and the tender's name was changed to *Lilac*.

She entered service in 1933 and was stationed in the Fourth Lighthouse District and was based out of Edgemoor, Delaware, where she conducted general aids to navigation work in the Delaware River area. When the Lighthouse Service merged with the Coast Guard in 1939, she then became a Coast Guard cutter but her homeport remained Edgemoor, although that harbor fell under the jurisdiction of the Fifth District. She was armed during the war but saw no action. Her armament was removed at the end of hostilities.

She remained at Edgemoor until 1948 when she was transferred to Gloucester City, New Jersey. Continuing with her general aids to navigation work, she was nevertheless frequently called upon to assist during search and rescue cases. On 15 to 17 May 1952 she assisted following the collision between the motor vessels *Barbara Lykes* and *F. L. Hayes* in the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal. On 22 May 1952 she assisted the tug *Pateo* and the *Atlantic Dealer* in the Delaware River. On 26 May 1952 she assisted following the collision between the tanker *Michael* and the motor barge *A. C. Dodge* near Ready Island. On 30 January 1953 she assisted the fishing vessel *Benjamin Brothers* in the Delaware River. From 6 to 12 June 1953 she assisted following the collision between the tankers *Pan Massachusetts* and the *Phoenix* in the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal. On 24 and 25 June 1953 she fought the fire on board the tanker *Pan Georgia* and searched for survivors in the Christina River. On 30 December 1953 she assisted the motor vessels *Atlantic Dealer* and *Atlantic Engineer* in the Delaware River. On 13 July 1955 she assisted the yacht *Nip and Tuck* in the

Delaware River.

She was donated to the Harry Lundeberg Seafarers International Union seamanship school in Maryland.

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.

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

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