



U.S. Coast Guard History Program

Sumac, 1944

WAGL / WLR-311

Any of various shrubs or small trees of the genus *Rhus*, having compound leaves, clusters of small greenish flowers, and usually red, hairy fruit. Some species, such as the poison ivy and poison oak, cause an acute itching rash on contact.

Builder: Peterson & Haecker, Limited, Blair, Nebraska

Length: 114' 6"

Beam: 30' 6"

Draft: 9'

Displacement: 350 tons

Cost: \$356,372

Commissioned: 1 November 1944

Decommissioned: 9 July 1999

Disposition: Donated to the Marine Learning Institute?

Machinery: 3 Fairbanks-Morse diesels (as built); 960 BHP; 3 propellers; re-engined with 3 D 379 Caterpillar diesels, rated at 715 BHP

Performance & Endurance:

Max: 11.0 knots

Cruising: 9.0 knots; 5,350 mile range

Deck Gear:

Complement: 24 (1945)

Electronics: None (WWII); Radiomarine Corporation 3.2-centimeter wave radar (1947)

Armament: None

Tender History:

The tender *Sumac* was built by Peterson & Haecker, Limited, in Blair, Nebraska. She was designed by A. M. Deering of Chicago, Illinois as a river tender. Her keel was laid on 13 March 1944 and she was launched into the Missouri River on 14 October 1944. She was sponsored by Coast Guard SPAR YN2 Helen Marie Peterson, the daughter of one of the shipyard owners. *Sumac's* powerplant consisted of three Fairbanks-Morse diesel engines. She was designed for light icebreaking and was fitted with a detachable ice-breaking prow and normally pushed a 136 ATON barge. She was placed in commission under the command of LT J. J. McSally, Jr. on 1 November 1944.

She was assigned to the 9th District and was stationed at Burlington, Iowa and Owensboro, Kentucky. She serviced aids to navigation, conducted search and rescue and broke ice when needed, over 641 miles of the Ohio River, from Dam 44 to Cairo, Illinois, Cumberland and Tennessee rivers to the Kentucky River. From 1 July 1946 until 12 November 1951 she was stationed at Paducah, Kentucky. She transferred back to Owensboro on 12 November 1951 and remained based there until 1 August 1962. On 21 November 1958 she assisted the M/V Barbara Lee towing three barges afire at mile 896 on the Ohio River. On 13 May 1961 she assisted in flood relief in the Carmi area.

On 1 August 1962 she transferred to Peoria, Illinois. She transferred to Cairo, Illinois in May of 1966. Late in 1968 she transferred to Hickman, Kentucky and on 1 October 1972 she transferred to Dubuque, Iowa. From 12 May 1973 until 1978 she was stationed at Keokuk, Iowa, where she was responsible for 400 miles of waterway, including the upper Mississippi River and its tributaries. In 1978 she transferred to St. Louis, Missouri. She assisted during the floods of 1993 and after the waters receded then "worked continuously, replacing hundreds of buoys and shore towers, and restored the channel to normal in a short period of time."

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Sources:

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

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.
