



Storis, 1942

WMEC-38/ WAGB-38/ WAG-38/ WAGL-38
ex-**Eskimo**

Nicknames: "Gallopig Ghost of the Alaskan Coast"; "Queen of the Fleet"

Call Sign NRUC

Builder: Toledo Shipbuilding Co., Toledo , OH

Builder's Number: CG-82

Cost: \$2,072,889 (hull & machinery)

Length: 230' oa

Beam: 43' 2" mb

Draft: 15' max (1945)

Displacement: 1715 fl (1945); 2030 fl (2006)

Keel Laid: 14 July 1941

Launched: 4 April 1942

Commissioned: 30 September 42

Decommissioned: 12 February 2007

Propulsion: 1 electric motor driven by generators driven by 3 Cooper-Bessemer-type GN-8 8-cylinder diesels; 1,800 SHP; single screw

Top speed: 13.0 knots

Economic speed: 8 knots

Complement: 17 officers, 131 men (1945); 12 officers, 72 Enlisted (2006)

Electronics:

Detection Radar: Bk (1943); SL (1945)

Sonar: QCL-2 (1945)

Armament: 2-3"/50 (single); 4-20mm/80 (single); 2 depth charge tracks' 4 Y-guns; 2 Mousetraps (1945); 1- 25MM Gun, 2- .50 cal machine guns (2006)

Design:

Storis was designed by the US Coast Guard with detail drawings by Toledo Shipbuilding Company to be a supply ship with a degree of icebreaking capability for the waters around Greenland. The contract was let on 26 January 1941. Her design closely parallels the smaller 180-foot buoy tenders of 1942-1944. She was to be named *Eskimo*. During her construction, however, the State Department, concerned that the natives of Greenland might find the name offensive, requested that another name be selected. "Storis" is a Scandinavian word meaning "great ice." *Storis* was the first tender fitted with a double top-lift boom and is the only example of her class..

Cutter History:

World War II and the 1950s

The USCGC *Storis* was assigned to CINCLANT (DESLANT) from 1942 to 1945. Stationed at Boston, MA, the cutter was used extensively in the waters around Greenland. *Storis* conducted anti-submarine exercises in Casco Bay, ME until 19 May 1943 before escorting a convoy to Argentia, Newfoundland and Narsarssuak, Greenland. Afterward, the cutter proceeded to sea to observe ice and weather conditions. On 12 June 1943 *Storis* joined Convoy GS-24 en route to St. John's, Newfoundland. The next day, 13 June, at 0510 there was an explosion on USCGC *Escanaba* and the ship sank almost immediately. *Storis* screened USS *Raritan* as the latter picked up survivors. In August 1943 *Storis* escorted a convoy to Frobisher Bay in the Canadian Arctic. The cutter searched for survivors of USAT *Nevada* on 18 December 1943. During most of January 1944, the cutter broke ice in the Greenland fjords and transported supplies to various stations. From 7 July 1944 through 31 October 1944 it searched for German trawlers off northeast Greenland. In the months following, *Storis* conducted escort duties in the waters around Greenland. This duty continued even after the cessation of hostilities in the European Theatre of Operations (ETO).

Postwar to 1957

In the years immediately following World War II *Storis* continued to be stationed at Boston. From 1 December 1947 through 15 September 1948, the cutter was stationed at Curtis Bay, MD and was used to support military preparedness. Upon completing the assignment at Curtis Bay, *Storis* transferred to Juneau, AK where it performed law enforcement and Search and rescue operations from 15 September 1948 through December 1957. Missions of note included the 16 December 1954 rescue of survivors from a Coast Guard plane crash at Haines Harbor, AK and the deployment with the US Navy for Arctic operations during the summer of 1955. On 17 January 1956 the crew fought a fire at a cold-storage plant in Juneau and later in the year the cutter again deployed for Arctic operations with the Navy.

Northwest Passage in 1957

On 1 July 1957 *Storis* departed in company with the Coast Guard cutters *Bramble* and *Spar* to search for a deep draft channel through the Arctic Ocean and to collect hydrographic information. This historic transit ended a 450-year search for the Northwest Passage – a route for large ships across the top of North America. Upon her return to Greenland waters, *Storis* became the first U.S. registered vessel to circumnavigate the North American continent. Shortly after her return to the Pacific through the Panama Canal in late 1957, *Storis* was assigned to a new homeport at Kodiak, Alaska.

Afterward

Though still classified as a light icebreaker, *Storis*' primary functions shifted to enforcing laws and treaties of the domestic and foreign fisheries in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska. During the summer of 1958 the cutter assisted in the re-supply of the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line stations in the Arctic. On 3 January 1959 Alaska became the 49th State in the Union, as a result the Bering Sea Patrol ceased operations. On 7 April 1959 the crew conducted a medical evacuation (medevac) of a seaman from the Soviet merchant vessel *Piscavaya Industriya* located at Akun Bay in the Aleutian Islands. Later in 1959 *Storis* conducted its final DEW Line re-supply mission as the Canadian government took on the mission of re-supplying the radar stations. In the 1960s *Storis*' mission regarding Alaskan Fisheries Patrol intensified as large fleets of Soviet and Japanese fishing vessels moved into Alaskan waters to harvest the abundant stocks of crabs and bottom fish. Following the earthquake of 27 March 1964, *Storis* broke ice in Cook Inlet in an attempt to aid those in distress.

Info on 1964 Earthquake and STORIS participation by a former crewman:

Kodiak, Alaska March/April 1964

Early in March the CGC STORIS returned from a trip to the

area around Unimak Pass and Scotch Cap L/S. A volcano in that area was sending up soot, etc. We stayed a few days and then returned to Kodiak.

We were getting ready for our scheduled patrol and were to leave about mid-March. Then we got a "recall" and headed out to the volcano area. The 17th District then decided we should commence our regular patrol. We did. Our patrol area was on the Bering Sea side of the Aleutian Islands and other fishing areas in the Bering Sea. Everything was just fine. We had our regular drills, instructions, and inspections.

Then on the evening of Friday, March 27 (Good Friday), we got the message to return to Kodiak. Kodiak was hit with an earthquake and tidal wave. Heading back all hands prepared for a tidal wave and everything was secured. We hit some rough water and that was about all.

About mid-day Easter Sunday we entered "Old Woman's Bay". The STORIS moved very slowly through the debris of logs, ice flow, parts of wooden structures, etc. We offloaded the helicopter and we docked. Everything looked very strange, hard to pin point it.

The families that lived on the Base came down to the ship. Families that lived in the city of Kodiak couldn't make it because the road was blocked by a big landslide. All communications were cut so our crew had no idea how their families were.

We were in port for about an hour and a half. We then got underway for Homer, Alaska. When we arrived at Homer Spit there were small vessels, tugs and barges, waiting for us to break ice so they could get up to Anchorage. We were underway doing that job, bringing the ships to Anchorage. And those that were unloaded followed us back to the ice-free areas.

We spent almost three weeks doing this, before we headed back to Kodiak.

We arrived in Kodiak on the 20th of April and every crew member's dependent was there waiting for us. Many dependents had evacuated, but none from the STORIS.

The dock was still there but it had anchor chain spread out on it, plus buoy sinkers. Seems the whole island of Kodiak sank 5 feet. This kept the ice from high tide getting underneath the dock and lifting it up.

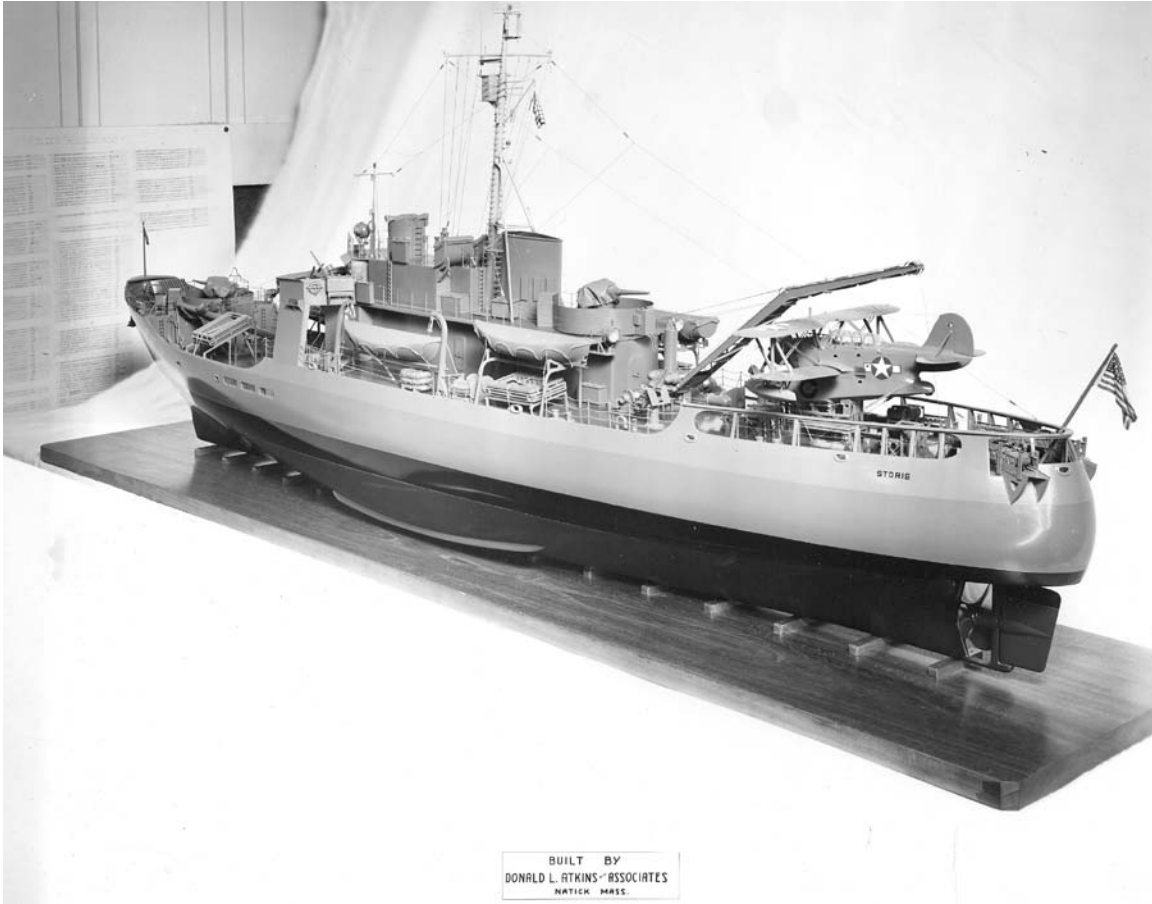
The STORIS did receive many nice letters from those we assisted over In Cook Inlet.

Edward J.Barbarow, YNC, USCG(Ret) <i>Storis</i> Crew 63-64

During January-February 1965 the cutter unsuccessfully searched for three Russian trawlers reported to be in the vicinity of the Unimak Pass. In March 1965, however, *Storis* intercepted the Soviet fishing vessel *Pavel Chebotnyagin* as she was illegally crabbing in restricted waters off Alaska and escorted the offender to international waters. In 1967 a Soviet trawler was boarded and seized for fishing within one mile of shore. A \$5,000 fine was levied against the ship's master in Federal court. This was the first Fisheries Patrol prosecution for a violation off Alaska. In subsequent years interceptions of Soviet and Japanese vessels illegally fishing Alaskan waters continued to constitute the majority of the ship's noteworthy activities. On 7 September 1969 the hull was holed by ice as the cutter assisted the tugboat *Active*. On 17 January 1972 *Storis* discovered a Soviet supply ship, *Lamut*, and the trawler, *Kolyvan*, engaged in fishing support operations within U.S. territorial waters in the Bering Sea. After having been boarded by members of the *Storis*' crew, the Soviets made an attempted escape into the ice. *Storis* seized the vessel and the ship's master was prosecuted. A \$150,000 fine was levied against the Soviets by the federal court. This was the largest fine to date for foreign flagged-vessels engaged in illegal fishing of US waters.

Later in 1972 *Storis* underwent a major renovation which saw the elimination of the cargo hold and her conversion her from a light icebreaker (WAGL) to a medium endurance cutter (WMEC). The re-configuration also resulted in the ship's complement being reduced to 30 men. In 1975 *Storis* along with USCGC *Burton Island* and USCGC *Citrus* provided icebreaking assistance to tugs and barges carrying vital supplies and materiel to Prudhoe Bay for the construction of the Trans-Alaskan Pipeline. *Storis* underwent another major overhaul in 1986 that replaced her power plant and expanded her living quarters to include a new berthing area for women and a lounge for the crew. During the Fall of 1992 *Storis* made a port call at Petropavlovsk on Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula. This was the first entry of a foreign military vessel into the port since 1854 when the British and French attempted to seize it during the Crimean War.

Storis held the distinction of being the oldest commissioned cutter in the Coast Guard fleet and bore the title of "Queen of the Fleet", proudly displaying her gold "38" hull numbers until she was decommissioned on 12 February 2007.



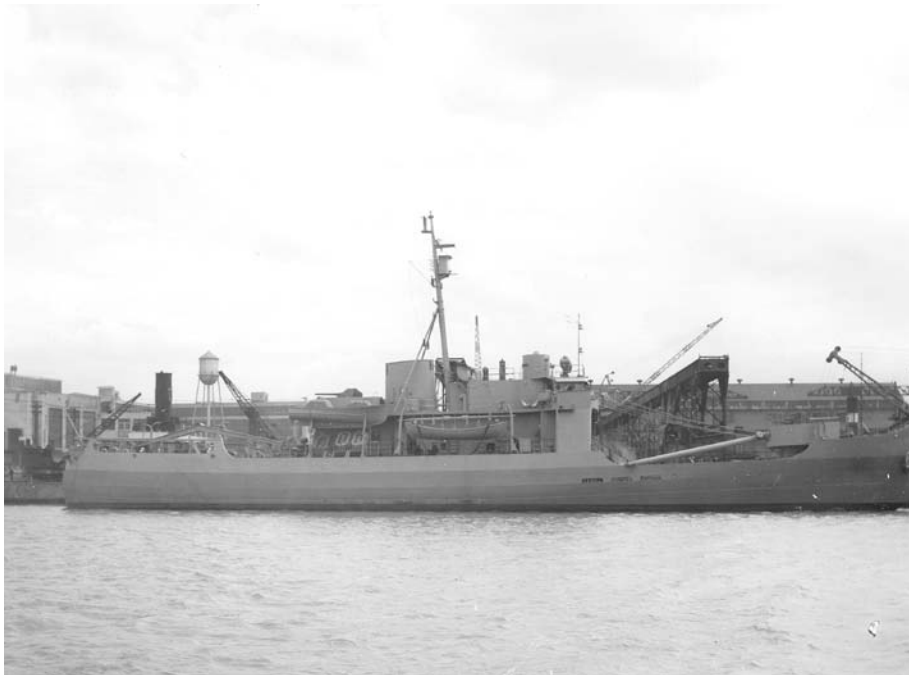
Builder's Model of USCGC *Storis*.



***Storis* under construction, 15 March 1942.**



USCGC *Storis* launching on 28 March 1942.



Storis, 23 September 1942.



USCGC *Storis* on 20 September 1943.



***Storis* in camouflage pattern paint during World War II.**



Storis, Northland, and Evergreen off Greenland on 6 November 1944.



Storis in camouflage off Greenland on 24 September 1945.



Storis, 6 May 1957



Storis on 6 May 1957- aerial view



Storis during Northwest Passage on 12 September 1957



***Storis* in Seattle on 27 April 1968**



USCGC *Storis* in the 17th Coast Guard District (no date)



USCGC *Storis* breaking ice on 1 October 1975 as part of operations in support of the construction of the Trans-Alaskan Pipeline.



USCGC *Storis* in 1979-starboard view



USCGC *Storis* aerial view on 2 September 1986.



USCGC *Storis* on 20 October 1994-starboard view



USCGC Storis punches through heavy weather while on patrol in the Bering Sea on 19 January 2000. USCG photo by SN Jerry Minchew.



Sources:

Cutter File, Coast Guard Historian's Office.

Robert Scheina. *Coast Guard Cutters & Craft of World War II*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1981.

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

