

Oregon Historic Site Record

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME			
address:	6735 N Basin Ave Portland, Multnomah County	historic name:	Motor Torpedo Boat PT-658
assoc addresses:		current/other names:	
location descr:	Swan Island Naval & Marine Corps reserve Center	block/lot/tax lot:	
		twshp/rng/sect/qtr sect:	1N 1E 17
PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS			
resource type:	structure	height (stories):	
elig evaluation:	eligible/significant	total elig resources:	1
prim constr date:	1945	NR Status:	Individually Listed
	second date:	date indiv listed:	09/04/2012
primary orig use:	DEFENSE: General	orig use comments:	Patrol Torpedo Boat
second orig use:		prim style comments:	
primary style:	Utilitarian	sec style comments:	
secondary style:		siding comments:	Decking and hull
primary siding:	Wood:Other/Undefined	architect:	
secondary siding:		builder:	Higgins Industries Boatyard, New Orleans, LA
plan type:			
comments/notes:			
GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS			
Not associated with any surveys or groupings.			
SHPO INFORMATION FOR THIS PROPERTY			
NR date listed:	09/04/2012	106 Project(s):	None
ILS survey date:		Special Assess Project(s):	None
RLS survey date:	01/19/2009	Federal Tax Project(s):	None
ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION			
<i>(Includes expanded description of the building/property, setting, significant landscape features, outbuildings and alterations)</i>			
<p>Built during World War II in 1945 at Higgins Industries Boatworks in New Orleans, PT-658 is a fully-restored and -operational example of a rare 625 Class Higgins Patrol Torpedo Boat (PT Boat). (Photos 1 and 2 of 12) Only 36 boats of this type were constructed. PT-658 is floating on the north bank of the Willamette River, housed in a custom-built boathouse at Swan Island in north Portland, Oregon. (Photo 3 of 12.) Constructed almost entirely of wood, the V-shaped planing hull is fitted over mahogany frames and constructed of spruce and mahogany planks with canvas between the two layers. The main feature of the deck is the Deckhouse, which is located on the first third of the boat, (Photo 4 of 12). The space contains the Chartroom, Radar Room and Helm (steering and propeller control station). Two circular 4-foot diameter plywood machine-gun tubs are set on either side of the Deckhouse, and the radar mast is centered behind it. Weapons mounted on the deck include machine guns, cannons, depth charges, torpedoes, and a smoke generator canister. The interior of PT-658 is divided below deck into eight watertight compartments separated by built-up plywood bulkheads (walls). Listed in order from bow to stern, they are: Forepeak (Chainlocker), Forward Crew's Quarters/Galley, Officers Wardroom, Forward Tank Room/Head, Engine Room, Aft Tank Room/Head, Aft Crews Quarters and Lazarette (Rudder Room). The Engineroom contains three model 5M-2500 Packard V12 marine engines. The first three compartments after the forepeak and the last three in the stern are joined by four functioning watertight doors, but separated by the engine room which can only be accessed by ladder from the deck. The period interior is constructed almost completely of painted wood and retains a high level of integrity, including the retention and/or careful restoration of the fully functional electrical system and interior fixtures and replication of the original interior paint scheme.</p>			
HISTORY			
<i>(Chronological, descriptive history of the property from its construction through at least the historic period - preferably to the present)</i>			
<p>First developed by the European powers in the early-twentieth century for coastal defense, PT boats became an indispensable part of the U.S. war strategy during WWII. Seeking a versatile and inexpensive weapon to defend the Philippines, General Douglas MacArthur secured 15 million dollars from Congress in 1941 to produce 100 PT boats to defend the islands. Considered ideal because these wood ships could be produced cheaply and quickly without utilizing steel needed for larger ships, the boats provided distinct advantages over aircraft, including being able to operate during foul weather and having a longer range. While PT-boats were unarmored, the use of a V-shaped planing hull and powerful engines enabled the boats to quickly attack better-armed and -armored targets and flee before they could be pursued. To aid in these hit-and-run attacks, PT boats boasted the heaviest armament of any U.S. Navy ship compared to their size. These versatile weapons and their crews served in the Pacific Ocean, Aleutian Islands, Mediterranean Sea, and coastal Europe, and played a key role in hampering the Japanese and German war effort by destroying enemy shipping. Other missions included supporting landings, harassing shore installations, and rescuing downed-pilots among other missions. Cheap to produce, fast, maneuverable, and heavily armed, PT boats carried out a variety of critical battlefield roles and were a key part of the overall strategy to win the war. Throughout their use in WW II, PT boat design was constantly changing to meet the needs of the crews and commanders that depended on them. As a late-model 625 Class Higgins Patrol Boat, PT-658 incorporates the latest hull, engine, and weapons designs, including mahogany exterior planking and strengthened structural system; the 1850 HP 5M-2500 V-12 Packard Marine Engine and upgraded intercoolers, shafts, and propellers to handle the additional power; and the roll-off Mark 13 torpedo launcher racks that reduced overall weight allowing for more and heavier weapons to be carried. As designed, the Higgins 625 class is the fastest, most maneuverable, and heavily armed of the Higgins wood-construction planning-hull PT Boats and represents significant achievements in design. Only thirty-six 625 Class PT Boats were built, and PT-658 has the highest level of integrity of the two remaining boats known to exist.</p>			
RESEARCH INFORMATION			
Title Records	Census Records	Property Tax Records	Local Histories
Sanborn Maps	Biographical Sources	SHPO Files	✓ Interviews
Obituaries	Newspapers	State Archives	Historic Photographs
City Directories	Building Permits	State Library	
Local Library:		University Library:	
Historical Society:		Other Respository:	Library of Congress
Bibliography:			

Andruss, Frank J. Sr. *Building The PT Boats*. Ann Arbor, MI: Nimble Books, 2009. Ballard, Robert D. *Collision with History: The Search for John F. Kennedy's PT-109*. Washington D.C.: National Geographic, 2002. Bulkley, Robert J. *At Close Quarters: PT Boats in the United States Navy*. Washington, DC: Naval History Division, 1962. Chun, Victor. *American PT Boats in World War II-A Pictorial History*. Atglen, PA: Schiffer Military/Aviation History, 1997. Connelly, Garth T. *PT Boats in Action*. Paperback: Carrollton, TX: Squadron Signal Publications, 1994. Donovan, Robert J. *PT-109*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961, 2001. Hamachek, Russ. *Recompense-A World War II Novel*. Seattle, WA: Hara Publishing, 2003. Hamachek, Russ. *Hot, Straight and True-An Anecdotal View of PT Boats in WW II*. Portland, OR: Russ Hamachek Publishing, 1995, 2001. JCS Group. "Something About Everything Military-Motor Torpedo Boat." <http://www.jcsgroup.com/military/navy/ptboats.html>. (accessed 13 July 2010). Johnson, Frank D. *United States PT-Boats of World War II*. New York, NY: Sterling Publishing Company, 1983. Lambert, John and Al Ross. *Allied Coastal Forces in World War II*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, Nd. Neal, Robert J. *Packards at Speed*. New York: Aero-Marine History Publishing Company, 1995. Office of Naval History. "An Administrative History of PT's during World War II." United States Navy: 15 February 1946. Polmar, Norman and Samuel Loring Morison. *PT Boats at War-World War II to Vietnam*. Osceola, WI: WBI Publishing Company, 1999.