

HOIST
(ARS-40)
James River Reserve Fleet
Newport News vicinity
Virginia

HAER VA-134
HAER VA-134

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

HOIST (ARS-40)

HAER No. VA-134

Location: James River Reserve Fleet, Newport News vicinity, Virginia

Rig/Type of Craft: Auxiliary

Dates of

Construction: Keel laying: September 13, 1944
Launching: March 31, 1945
Commissioning: July 21, 1945

Builder: Basalt Rock Company, Napa, California

Original Owner/Use: U.S. Navy, salvage and rescue

Present Owner/Use: Scrapped

Significance: The *Hoist* was one of six salvage vessels built for the U.S. Navy during World War II and performed numerous salvage operations during its career.

Description: Length (oa): 213'-6"
Beam: 39'
Draft: 14'-8"
Displacement: 1,497 long tons
Maximum continuous shaft horsepower: 2,780
Service speed: 15 knots
Propulsion: Diesel-electric plant, twin screw
(The listed dimensions are as built, but it should be noted that draft, displacement, and tonnages were subject to alteration over time as well as variations in measurement.)

History: The U.S. Navy's own Bureau of Construction, along with naval officers and the salvage industry, developed a group of salvage ships known as the *Bolster* class during World War II. The salvage ships were sturdy, oceangoing tugs equipped with diesel-electric propulsion units and strong, auto-tensioned towing winches. The U.S. Navy modeled the *Bolster* class on the *Diver* salvage ship design. The key difference between the two types of salvage ships was

that the *Bolster* class was designed with a 5' longer beam, which made the ships more stable and allowed them to carry more equipment. Otherwise, the *Bolster* and *Diver* classes were identical.¹

The Basalt Rock Company's Steel Division built all six of the vessels in the *Bolster* class. The company was located south of Napa, California, on the Napa River. As the name suggests, the company had originally started in 1920 as a rock quarry operation, but by 1938, it had begun constructing its own barges. In addition to the *Bolster* class, the shipyard built sixteen *Diver*-class vessels, 115 barges, and various other vessels for the U.S. Navy from 1940 until 1945. The *Hoist*'s keel was laid on September 13, 1944, and it was launched on March 31, 1945.²

Lt. Comdr. R. M. Brunner was in command of the *Hoist* at its commissioning on July 21, 1945. From September 1945 until June 1946, the ship was engaged in salvage and repair operations at various locations in Japan. After returning to the United States for an overhaul, the *Hoist* was used for several months as a training site for students attending the Naval Training Salvage School. During the 1940s through the 1960s, the ship was homeported in Norfolk, Virginia, but deployed to Canadian, Caribbean, and Florida waters for salvage and repair operations and occasional towing duties. Notable operations included a February 1966 trip to Palomares, Spain, to participate in recovering an H-bomb.

In 1994, the *Hoist* was decommissioned. The ship's title was transferred to the Maritime Administration in 2001, and it was laid up in the National Defense Reserve Fleet. On July 17, 2007, it was sold for scrap, but the buyer, North American Ship Recycling, went out of business. The scrapping contract was then awarded to Bay Bridge Enterprises on November 30, 2007, and the ship was towed away the following month.³

Sources:

Bartholomew, C.A. *Mud, Muscle, and Miracles: Marine Salvage in the United States Navy*. Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 1990.

Harper, Scott. "2 Ships from Ghost Fleet Return for Last Time After Initial Deal Sinks." *The Virginian-Pilot*, November 29, 2007.

"Hoist." *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, available online at <http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/h7/hoist.htm>.

Historian: Justine Christianson, HAER, 2011

¹ C.A. Bartholomew, *Mud, Muscle, and Miracles Marine Salvage in the United States Navy* (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 1990), pp. 54, 444.

² "Basalt Rock Company, Napa, CA," available at <http://shipbuildinghistory.com/history/shipyards/4emergencysmall/basalt.htm>, accessed August 17, 2009.

³ Operational History from *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, available online at <http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/h7/hoist.htm>, and "USS Hoist (ARS)," available online at <http://www.navy.mil/navsource.org/archives/09/37/3740.htm>, both accessed September 2011. See also Scott Harper, "2 Ships from Ghost Fleet Return for Last Time After Initial Deal Sinks," *The Virginian-Pilot*, November 29, 2007.

**Project
Information:**

This project is part of the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER), a long-range program to document historically significant engineering and industrial works in the United States. The Heritage Documentation Programs of the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, administers the HAER program. The project was prepared under the direction of Todd Croteau (HAER Maritime Program Coordinator). David Haas produced the large-format photographs.

For more information on the *Bolster* class, see *Bolster*, HAER No. CA-355.