

Location by Global Positioning System

Using the NAD83 datum set, the center point of the Matagorda Island Liberty Ship Reef ⁽¹⁾ is located at 28° 06' 58.806" N and 96° 05' 14.542" W (Matagorda Island Block 616). This point can be reached by sailing 21 nautical miles on a bearing of 139° from the Matagorda jetties.

Reef Component	North Latitude	West Longitude
Liberty Ship ^(2, 3)	28° 06' 59.732"	96° 05' 12.035"
Liberty Ship ^(4, 5)	28° 07' 00.183"	96° 05' 17.745"
Liberty Ship ^(6, 7)	28° 06' 55.442"	96° 05' 09.327"

Detailed maps of this and other reef sites are available for purchase from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Artificial Reef Program. For additional information contact:

Artificial Reef Program
Seabrook Marine Laboratory
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
P.O. Box 8
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Credits

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Texas Historical Commission, Austin



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Matagorda Island Liberty Ship Reef



World War II Heritage
for Divers, Anglers
and the Public



The bravery of America's Merchant Marines helped the Allies win World War II. Now, fourteen World War II ships that carried supplies and oil into the most dangerous fronts of the war serve as artificial reefs off the coast of Texas. Located in six readily accessible reef sites, they offer divers and recreational anglers an encounter not only with magnificent reefs, but also with America's maritime heritage.

The **Matagorda Island Liberty Ship Reef** is composed of three Liberty Ships, the *Dwight L. Moody*, the *Jim Bridger* and the *George Dewey*. Nine other Liberty Ships are

located at other reef sites along the Texas coast. Brochures for these reef sites are available from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

The *Dwight L. Moody* made the perilous Atlantic crossing several times during World War II; one convoy was attacked, with two ships torpedoed. Both the *Jim Bridger* and the *George Dewey* served in the Normandy invasion, transporting Army and Navy personnel and cargo. The crew of the *George Dewey* received the Operation and Engagement Star for their participation in the initial phases of the invasion. The crew of the *Jim Bridger* later received the Philippine Liberation ribbon for services including a landing at Mindanao.

Photo courtesy of the National Archives. (November 4, 1944)

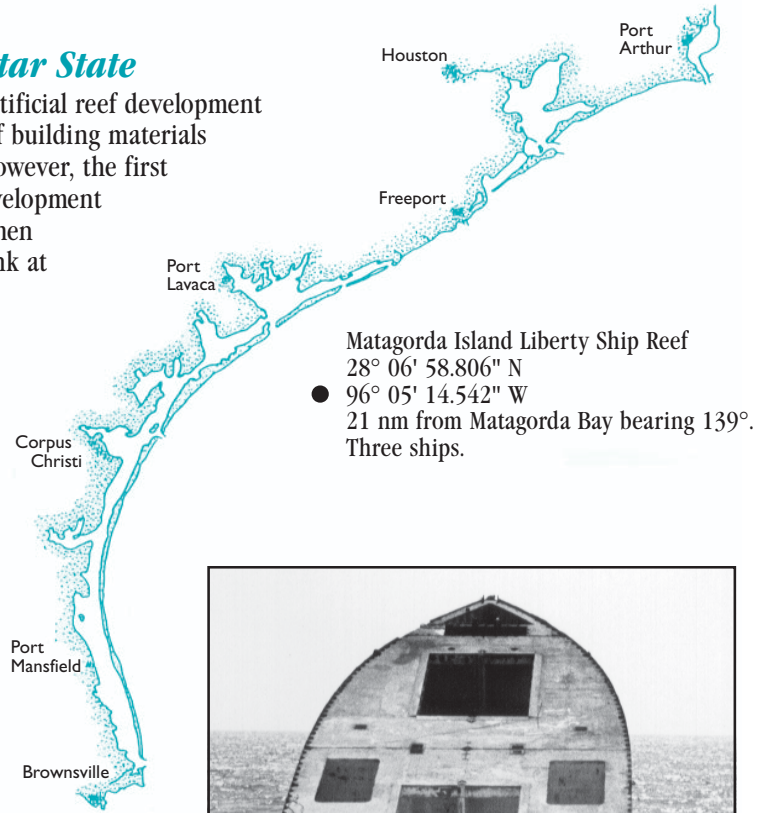


At a French port ammunition receives priority handling from Liberty ship to railway box car for quick dispatch to the front. Off loading by pallets permitted the handling of 30 boxes at one time, with each box containing 60 projectiles for the 105 mm howitzer, the backbone of the U.S. field artillery.

Texas Artificial Reefs A Tribute to the Lone Star State

Texas has been involved in artificial reef development for nearly 50 years. Numerous reef building materials have been used over the years. However, the first highly successful artificial reef development occurred during the mid-1970's when 12 obsolete Liberty Ships were sunk at five different sites in the Gulf of Mexico. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Artificial Reef Program has added materials to most of these sites and created others through programs like Rigs to Reefs, in which petroleum companies donate obsolete petroleum platforms to the Program.

At these sites, anglers may encounter numerous fish species including amberjack, snapper, cobia, Atlantic spadefish, triggerfish, tarpon, sharks (such as the blacktip, tiger, dusky, and hammerhead), and grouper. In addition, divers may see colorful damsel fish, butterflyfish, blennies, and countless invertebrates. To date, 24 artificial reef sites have been established to benefit the environment by creating habitat for marine organisms, and to provide areas for increased fishing and sport diving opportunities.

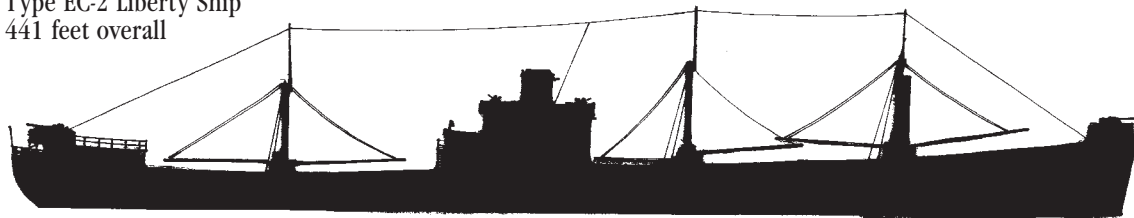


Matagorda Island Liberty Ship Reef
 28° 06' 58.806" N
 ● 96° 05' 14.542" W
 21 nm from Matagorda Bay bearing 139°.
 Three ships.

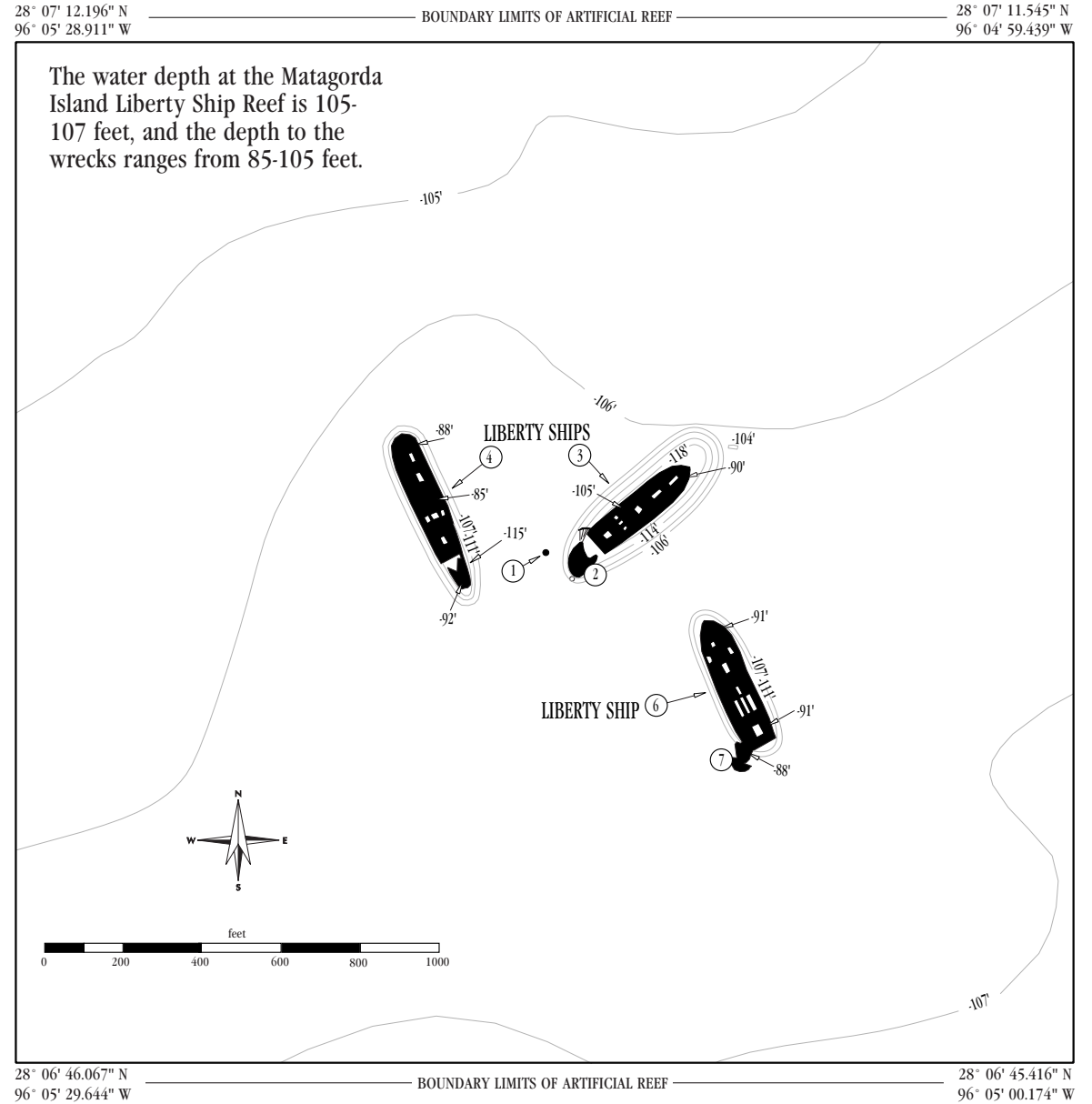


With the stern already resting on the bottom, the bow of this Liberty Ship will soon be submerged to form a part of an artificial reef. The Texas Coastal and Marine Council constructed four such reefs using twelve ships in waters of the Gulf of Mexico off Texas in the mid-1970's.

Type EC-2 Liberty Ship
441 feet overall



Andrew Hall (1995)



the
LIBERTY
SHIP
REEFS