

Sister Ships *Frank H. Buck* & *Lyman Stewart* "Born Together & Died Together"



Photo: San Francisco Maritime Research Center P83-142a 1,666g

TN *Frank H. Buck* shortly after launch



Photo: Robert Schwemmer Maritime Library

Frank H. Buck down by the bow after the collision, Mile Rock in the distance (upper). The stern section separated from the bow during a storm was pushed inshore (lower).

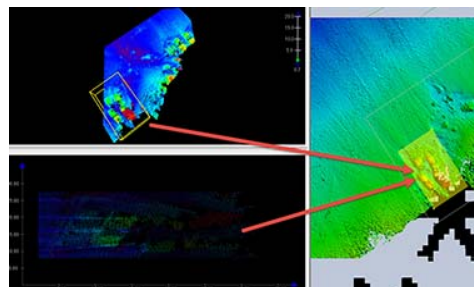


Photo: NOAA Office of Coast Survey NRT6

2014 Multi-beam sonar view of the shipwreck TN *Frank H. Buck*'s machinery

Tanker Vessel *Frank H. Buck*

History

Frank H. Buck, a steel single screw oil tanker steamer was built for the Associated Oil Company by the Union Iron Works of San Francisco, Calif. The keel of this vessel was laid on August 21, 1913, eventually being launched on February 11, 1914. The ship had been constructed in accordance with Lloyd's requirements to Class 100 A 1 in the Register. The hold was subdivided into 18 tanks for carrying oil in bulk, with the starboard and port compartments being separated by an oil-tight centerline bulkhead up to the top of the expansion trunk.

The *San Francisco Chronicle* newspaper on February 12, 1914 reported, "With an ease and precision that was nothing short of marvelous to the thousands massed about the ways, the Associated Oil Company's huge new steel tankship slipped from her cradle at the Union Iron Works.... Miss Nina A Heilborn dashed a bottle of California champagne against the stern... christened the steamer "Frank H. Buck," after her uncle, vice-

president of the Associated Oil Company."

The tanker's 23-year career included being commissioned into the U.S. Navy in 1918 as the USS *Frank H. Buck* and engaged the *U-155* with gunfire, inflicting serious damage to the German submarine.

Frank H. Buck

Nationality: American
Class: Oil Tanker
Official No: 212090 Call Sign: WQCO
Owner: Tide Water Associated Oil Company
Hull Material: Steel
Home Port: San Francisco, California
Registered Length (feet): 408.8 OAL 426.9
Registered Beam (feet): 55.5
Registered Depth of Hold (feet): 31.7
Gross Tonnage: 6077
Net Tonnage: 3850
Machinery: Triple Expansion Steam Engine
Builder: Union Iron Works of San Francisco
Cylinders: 3 @ 26 1/2" - 45 1/2" - 75" Stroke: 48"
Boilers Scotch: 4 Dia. 13' 6" Length: 11' 3"
Propeller: Four-Blade 8' 9"
Horsepower: 2600 Nominal Speed: 11 knots
Cargo Capacity: 64,000 Barrels

Collision with SS *President Coolidge*

On March 6, 1937, bound through the Golden Gate for Martinez with a full cargo of oil from Ventura, *Frank H. Buck* was rammed head-on by the Dollar Lines luxury passenger liner *President Coolidge*. *Buck* heard warning signals too late, and took evasive action only when collision was unavoidable. At the nearby Marine Exchange station at Lands End, the lookout "heard the fog horns of both vessels for some minutes before the crash." The fog was too thick to see anything... he said, "then, all of sudden came the crash. Through the heavy fog it sounded like a big, muffled boom of a Presidio gun. At once the *Coolidge* sent up three short whistle blasts and I knew right away something went wrong, for that was a distress signal. After that there was an awful silence, broken only by buoy horns." When the vessel was down by the bow trailing oil, the crew was ordered into the lifeboats. Quick and efficient lowering of the boats, and the prompt response by rescue craft from the Coast Guard and the San Francisco Police Department, were largely responsible for saving all hands.

Tanker Vessel *Lyman Stewart*

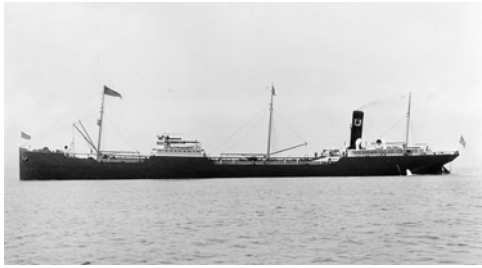


Photo: San Francisco Maritime Research Center P83-142a 1,771g1

T/V *Lyman Stewart* shortly after launch

The *Lyman Stewart* is one of the largest vessels of its kind ever turned out here, and will be a fine addition to the great fleet of oil carriers now operating out of the Golden Gate in the coastwise and offshore traffic. The employees of the Union Iron Works who assisted in the building of the Union Oil Company tanker *Lyman Stewart* were last night, the guests of the Union Oil Company at a banquet."

Collision with SS *Walter A. Luckenbach*

Leaving the Union Oil Company's dock at the San Francisco Bay port of Oleum, heavy with oil bound for Seattle, *Lyman A. Stewart* approached the Golden Gate on the afternoon of October 7, 1922. Captain J. G. Cloyd was in command. A heavy swell and a strong tidal current added to the danger of a thick fog bank as the tanker proceeded out the harbor entrance along the northern, or outbound, side of the main ship channel.

At the same time the freighter *Walter A. Luckenbach* was heading in to the Gate at the end of a long voyage that began at New York. The fog muffled horns and whistles on both vessels. Capt. Brenner of *Luckenbach* saw the long hull of *Stewart* cut across his bow, and heard the blasts of its whistle -- too late to avoid disaster. The freighter cut deep into the port bow of the heavily laden tanker, causing water to rush in and putting it down by the bow immediately. The *Stewart's* Captain Cloyd

ordered hands to abandon ship, while he stayed with his command and piloted it toward shore, trailing oil. *Stewart* grounded on the rocks at Lands End and ripped its hull on the jagged rocks. All thirty-eight hands aboard were saved.

Ripley's Believe It or Not!

The fate of *Frank H. Buck* and *Lyman Stewart* launched within a few feet of each other, going their separate ways, and then wrecking in similar circumstances and coming together again in death, 15 years apart, has inspired much comment through the years. The strange fate of these sister ships also inspired a mention in "Ripley's Believe It Or Not!"

Lyman Stewart

Nationality: American
Class: Oil Tanker
Official No: 212860 Call Sign: LFBW
Owner: Union Oil Company of California
Hull Material: Steel
Home Port: San Francisco, CA
Registered Length (feet): 408.8 OAL 426.9
Registered Beam (feet): 55.5
Registered Depth of Hold (feet): 31.7
Gross Tonnage: 5919
Net Tonnage: 3635
Machinery: Triple Expansion Steam Engine
Builder: Union Iron Works of San Francisco
Cylinders: 3 @ 26 1/2" - 45 1/2" Stroke 75"
Boilers: Single End Scotch: 4
Horsepower: 3000 Indicated
Cargo Capacity: 65,000 Barrels



Photo: San Francisco Maritime Research Center A3.3.325j

T/V *Lyman Stewart* stranded in the rocks in 1922 at Lands End, *Frank H. Buck* will join the *Stewart* 15 years later in 1937. The shipwreck remains are located in the Golden Gate National Recreational Area managed by NPS.

History

The *San Francisco Chronicle* newspaper on November 1, 1914 reported, "The new oil tanker *Lyman Stewart*, built for Union Oil Company of California was successfully launched yesterday morning at the Union Iron Works. Several hundred invited guests gathered around the bows of the big vessel as Miss Dorothy May Stewart, the sponsor, dashed a bottle of champagne against the side and christened the tanker.

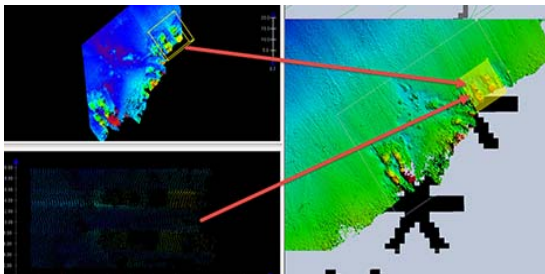
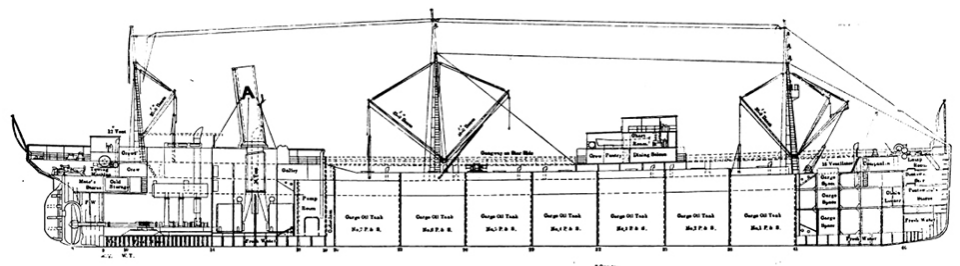


Photo: NOAA Office of Coast Survey NRT6

2014 Multi-beam sonar view of the shipwreck T/V *Lyman Stewart's* machinery at Lands End, Point Lobos.



International Marine Engineering 1914

Profile drawing of the tanker vessel *Frank H. Buck* launched February 11, 1914, her sister ship *Lyman Stewart* was built on the same lines and launched on October 31, 1914.