



PT-305 Timeline of Events and Milestones

March 30, 1943 – PT-305's keel is laid down at the City Park Plant of Higgins Industries in New Orleans.

May 27, 1943 – PT-305 is launched.

November 10, 1943 – PT-305, along with PT-302 through PT-313, is assigned to Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron 22 (Ron 22). Ron 22 is commissioned under the command of LCDR Richard J. Dressling and assigned to the Mediterranean.

December 8, 1943 – PT-305 is commissioned into the US Navy.

June 18, 1944 – Boats from Ron 22 participate in the Invasion of Elba.

July 18, 1944 – PT-305 sinks a German Flak lighter of Palamaria Island, Italy.

August 15, 1944 – Ron 22 is part of Operation Dragoon, the invasion of Southern France.

September 15, 1944 – PT-305 sinks a German F-lighter off Point Del Mesco, Italy.

April 24, 1945 – PT-305 sinks an Italian MAS boat off Cape Della Arma, Italy.

Late April 1945 – Ron 22 is returned to the United States to be overhauled in preparation for deployment to the Pacific. The war, however, ends while the squadron is still in New York Harbor.

November 15, 1945 – The squadron is decommissioned, still under the command of LCDR Richard J. Dressling.

June 18, 1948 – PT-305 is sold for \$10. After stints as a tour boat in New York City and a fishing charter, PT-305 is eventually modified for work as an oyster boat in Chesapeake Bay. To save on fuel, the three Packard engines—which required 100 octane aviation gasoline to operate—are removed and replaced with two diesel engines. All of the upper works are removed and a chart house is fitted at the stern. To avoid Coast Guard regulations requiring a licensed captain of vessels over 65 feet in length, 13 feet of boat is removed from the stern.

2000 – John Kushner, an original Museum trustee and an ardent enthusiast of WWII history with a particular affinity for collecting and restoring artifacts, implores Museum officials acquire a PT boat. The Museum's search, long and arduous, comes down to either PT-305 or PT-659.

2001 – PT-305 is acquired by Defenders of the America Naval Museum in Galveston, Texas.

Early 2004 – While the Museum struggles between PT-659 and PT-305, another PT boat—308—enters the scene to play a crucial role in the pending restoration of either ship. Important exhaust ports, among other items, are salvaged from PT-308, stationed in Delaware at the time.

August 2005 – Though progress is being made with PT-305's owners, while concurrent efforts to evaluate PT-659 are ongoing, lives and priorities change as Hurricane Katrina hits. The project is put on hold indefinitely.

June 2006 – As the city and the Museum are showing signs of recovery, the Defenders contact Museum officials about the possible transfer of PT-305.

April 2007 – After more than 63 years, PT-305 returns home to New Orleans and is transported to the Museum campus. An extensive photo survey begins of the inner and outer hull, for comparison with Higgins PT boat plans and to determine the scope of work required.

December 2007 – A postwar Packard engine is donated to the restoration effort, a vital step in the process. The initial donation leads the restoration crew to Don Rusch, a farmer in northern Illinois who had owned more than 30 Packard engines, which he bought from a naval supply shop for personal use. Rusch donates more than \$500,000 worth of Packard parts to the project, including engines, carburetors, and many other crucial contributions. Many of the parts are still in the original WWII wrapping.

October 2009 – After initially being stored in a parking lot on Museum property, PT-305 is moved to the old Prager Machine Shop facility, where dedicated workshops are established and restoration of the hull begins in earnest.

Fall 2010 – Following months of parts removal and cleaning the crew begins the process of restoring the basic structure of PT-305—including rebuilding the 13 feet that were removed from the stern of PT-305.

April 2011 – PT-305 is moved from the Prager shop to Kushner Restoration Pavilion, which is still under construction (wrapping up in June).

August 2014 – The final rivet is driven into place, signaling one of the biggest milestones in PT-305's restoration. Next up is installation of equipment into compartments and putting the finishing touches on the hull.

October 2014 – After being dormant for a half-century, the three Packard engines are started up once more.

December 2014 – Hull restoration of PT-305 is completed.

Spring 2015 – With the major hull restoration is complete, the process of fitting out the various systems that power the boat begins.

December 2015 – Two of the engines are installed, with a third following shortly after. The aft fuel tanks are also put into place.

February 2016 – As the electrical, plumbing, and ventilation systems are installed and inspected, the crew spaces are beginning to return to their original configuration and the deck is being outfitted with munitions.

July 2016 – Nearly seven years and more than 100,000 volunteer hours later, PT-305's restoration is complete. She will remain on display at The National WWII Museum through fall 2016.

January/February 2017 – PT-305 returns to her home waters of Lake Pontchartrain in her fully restored condition to undergo sea trials with the US Coast Guard.

March 2017 – For the first time in history, passenger rides are available on a full restored PT boat as PT-305 begins her new mission: connecting today's generations to the WWII story through direct, authentic experiences with an authentic macro artifact operating as she did during the war.