



OREGON PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

NEWS RELEASE

September 5, 2012

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Photo opportunity: Media are invited to visit PT-658 at 11 a.m. Monday, Sept. 10, at the fire station dock at the east end of the Hawthorne Bridge (05 SE Madison St.) in Portland. (The boat's permanent base is at Swan Island.)

Rare Historic PT boat in Oregon Listed in National Register

The only remaining operable PT boat from World War II, the class of versatile motor torpedo boats made famous through the exploits of President John Kennedy, has been listed this week in the National Register of Historic Places.

The boat, PT-658, has been exactly restored by former PT boat veterans and volunteers for the nonprofit Save the PT Boat, Inc. for the past 18 years.

“We are delighted to have PT-658 listed in the National Register,” said Maurice Hooper, former PT boat crewman and Save the PT Boat, Inc. board president. “It’s a tribute to all of the veterans who served on PT boats and helped secure this nation’s freedom during World War II, as well as the dozens of volunteers who have worked tirelessly, investing thousands of hours to restore this historic boat.”

Boats like the PT-658 were developed in the early 20th century by European naval powers as part of their coastal defenses. These small, wooden boats were an inexpensive way to quickly deliver torpedoes which could destroy ships as heavy as battleships.

The United States began manufacturing PT boats in 1941 shortly before entering World War II. The PT boats carried more armament for their size than any other naval vessel, said one historian, but were sometimes considered expendable.

Kennedy was the commanding officer of PT-109 when it was crushed by a Japanese ship in May 1942. He also commanded PT-59. Kennedy’s success with these wooden ships, which was popularized during his 1960 presidential campaign, was the subject of several books and a movie.

PT-658 was built near the end of the war in New Orleans. Save the PT Boat Inc. acquired PT-658 and moved it to Portland in 1994. The authenticity and accuracy of its restoration are exemplary, according to its National Register nomination. Only two other PT boats are listed in the National Register, but neither is currently operating.

The PT-658 nomination was reviewed and approved by the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office and the Oregon State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation prior to its presentation to the National Register.

The National Register is maintained by the National Park Service under the authority of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. More information about the National Register and recent Oregon listings is online at www.oregonheritage.org (click on “National Register” at left of page). Save The PT Boat Inc. maintains a website at www.savetheptboatinc.com