

# **YP-453, ex yacht M/V *Pleiades***

## **Narrative of History & Wartime Loss, 1928-1943**

For: Mr. David Wright, Manager, Yard & District Craft Archives, Navsource.org,

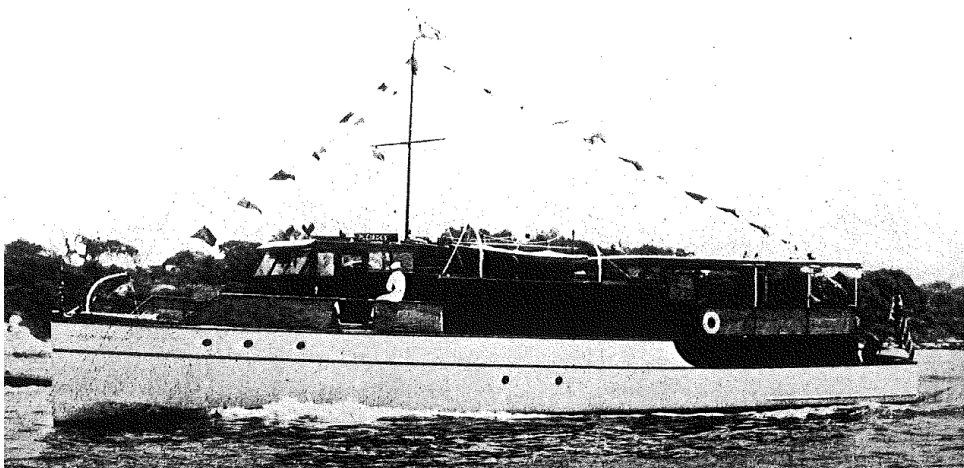
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The site where the motor yacht *Pleiades* was built in 1928 at the Consolidated Shipbuilding was situated in the Morris Heights, the Bronx, across the river from Manhattan's Harlem River Drive at 193<sup>rd</sup> Street. *Rudder* magazine of November 1929 (page 64) described *Pleiades* as a "Cruising House Yacht," its authors writing that she and her sisters *Kegonsa*, *Zinganee*, *Ardea*, *Lone Star*, *Nashira*, and *Vitesse* are "...a fleet of distinguished-looking fast, roomy cruisers – all familiar to yachtsmen in New York waters and the Sound. ....The interior arrangements of this yacht have been especially well planned, and her appointments reflect good taste throughout." *Motor Boating* magazine added that the seven boats in the series share an "...exceptionally large deck house together with the ample after deck and very high speed. ...Owner's quarters are found in the deck house and after portion of the boat and comprise the large living and dining room in the deck house together with two double staterooms and baths below deck. In the forward portion of the boat are the quarters for the crew, captain's stateroom and galley" (December 1929 pages 26-28). The after deck alone is described as 21 feet by 12 feet. The yacht was further fitted with "ice machines, electric windlasses, running water to all fixtures and baths, [and] electric lighting systems."



M/V *Pleiades* under way. Note the fairly high mast and the bunting flying. *Rudder* magazine, November 1929, page 64. Photo by M. Rosenfeld. Courtesy of Mystic Seaport Museum of America and the Sea, Mystic, CT.

Consolidated Shipbuilding “was a builder of luxury yachts, the result of the merger of Charles L. Seabury Co., originally established at Nyack [New York] in 1885, and Gas Engine & Power Co. ....the companies operated jointly for many years: their activities were consolidated under the Consolidated Shipbuilding name during World War One. The yard was located on Matthewson Road, in the Bronx, in what is now Roberto Clemente State Park. After WWII, Consolidated bought the Robert Jacob shipyard on City Island and closed the Morris Heights yard. It ceased to be an active shipbuilder in 1958, but continues as a yacht repair center” (Tim Colton, [shipbuildinghistory.com/ history/shipyards/6yachtsmall/consolidated](http://shipbuildinghistory.com/history/shipyards/6yachtsmall/consolidated)).

The name *Pleiades* originates in Greek and also Hindu mythology. The name refers to the seven daughters of Atlas whose names were Maia, Electra, Celaeno, Taygeta, Merope, Alcyone, and Sterope (thefreedictionary.com). *Pleiades* refers to a cluster of stars in the constellation Taurus. Though there are several hundred in the cluster, six of them can be seen by the naked eye. Fittingly the yacht was last of seven in the series to be delivered.

The yacht *Pleiades*’ dimensions were 78 feet, nine inches (by almost all other accounts 82 feet overall), with a beam of 14 feet four (or six) inches and a draft of six feet nine inches aft and three feet 11 inches forward. Her tonnage is listed in the 1933 *Lloyd’s Register of American Yachts* as being 51 tons net and 75 tons gross (fully loaded with fuel, water, passengers, etc.). In another list of Consolidated yachts, her displacement is listed as 39.99 tons. Her official number was 227205, and Consolidated both designed and built her as their hull number 2898.

*Pleiades'* propulsion consisted of twin gasoline engines of four cycles and six cylinders. In the list of Consolidated-built vessels her propulsion was "2-6 cyl. 7 X 8.5 R," also described as "7 X 8.5 Speedway". It appears that she was originally powered by gasoline engines. In 1937 the Fogal Boat Yard in Miami reported to *Motor Boating* magazine that they re-powered *Pleiades* with twin Budda diesels (*Motor Boating*, December 1937, page 106). The engines are listed as developing 300 horsepower, or 150 horsepower each. The hull was fabricated of wood. Her speed was originally given by Consolidated as 23.27 knots, and years later as half that: 12 knots when propelled by the new, less volatile diesel engines.

*Pleiades* was commissioned, built, bought and owned by only one private individual: Joseph Lester Parsons, Sr. of 88 High Street Montclair, New Jersey, 110 William Street, New York City, and Via Vizcaya, Palm Beach, Florida. Born in September 1871, he was educated in public schools in Montclair. In 1886, at the age of 15 he started work as an office boy at the United States Fire Insurance Company, over which he would later become president. He married Lucille Frances Myers in Brooklyn in 1903, and they had a son and two daughters. Parsons was, in the words of a law case in 1931, "a man of wide experience, who had been in the fire insurance business for over twenty-five years, and was then the President of two fire insurance companies" (*Lucille F. Parsons and J. Lester Parsons v. Federal Realty Corporation*, 12/15/31). He was vice-president and from 1903 a co-owner of Crum and Forster, parent of US Fire and Insurance Co. In 1919 Parsons was vice president of the North River Insurance Company, and he served as a director of the Williamsburg City Fire Insurance Company and the New Brunswick Insurance Company, among several others. He was active at the New York Historical Society, the Sons of the American Revolution, and the Essex County Country Club (*The American*

*Broker and Business Man Blue Book*, 1921). From March 26, 1925 he was a member of the prestigious New York Yacht Club. Both his namesake son and grandson attended Princeton.



*Pleiades'* main deck salon looking forward. Note the radio on right, which was later ripped out by the US Navy. From *Motor Boating* magazine, December 1929, page 27. Photograph by M. Rosenfeld. Courtesy of the Mystic Seaport: Museum of America and the Sea, Mystic, CT.

In September 1937 Parsons' wife Lucille died. His daughter Lulu married George W. Vanderbilt. In January 1938 Parsons married Helen Boynton Wells of St. Louis Missouri in New York (*The New York Post*, January 26, 1938). The newlyweds took "a honeymoon cruise in the bridegroom's yacht, the *Pleiades*, in which he usually passes several months in Southern waters. They will return to New York in the spring (Ibid.). On January 12<sup>th</sup> 1941 the *Palm Beach Post* reported that Parsons entertained a "men's luncheon followed by cards" aboard *Pleiades* the

previous day. On February 6<sup>th</sup> 1941 the Parsons and guests took the *Pleiades* on a weekend cruise of the Florida Keys (Ibid.). In 1954 Mr. and Mrs. Parsons cruised the South Pacific and Japan on the RMS *Caronia* under Captain Williams. His son J. Lester Parsons Jr. (Jay) was a co-founder in 1965 of the prestigious maritime law firm of Burke & Parsons in New York, which is still extant. His descendants continue to be benefactors of a variety of causes, among them the Henry L. Ferguson Museum of Fishers Island, New York, where his son and daughter lived until 2013.

After more than 13 years of service to the Parsons family and extensive cruising from the Florida Keys to New England, the *Pleiades* lasted just over 10 months in the US Navy before a trained crew wrecked her in the Bahamas. During her civilian life the crew required to man the yacht consisted of a captain, engineer, and small crew to serve guests. In all likelihood Parsons conned the wheel for some of the time. Within six months of Germany declaring war on the United States Parsons gave *Pleiades* to the US Navy. For his patriotism he was remunerated the princely sum of one dollar on the 8<sup>th</sup> of June 1942, when the yacht lay in Miami (she was “accepted as a gift”). Two days later, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of June, the Chief of Naval Operations directed she be delivered to a US Navy conversion yard and placed in service post-haste.

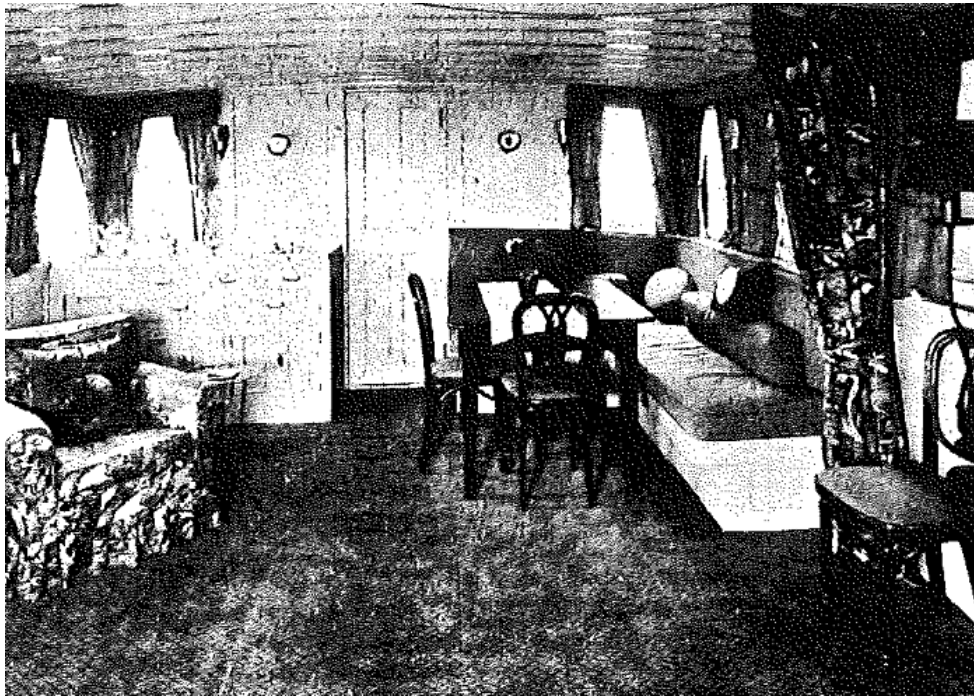
The earliest record which the US Navy kept on the yacht was dated the 9<sup>th</sup> of May 1942, at which point they were performing due diligence prior to assuming ownership. A “conversion progress record” is dated the 18<sup>th</sup> of May 1942, though actual conversion had not yet begun. Once the handover was complete work proceeded rapidly. Since the navy was under siege by German U-boats ravaging the east coast of Florida and Bahamas at the time, they were under tremendous pressure to do something about the menace, but had inadequate numbers of

destroyers and submarine chasers available from other theaters, such as the Pacific, which was being treated as a priority at the time.

From these various circumstances emerged collection of amateur yachts which were either manned or donated by civilian personnel in a patriotic effort to help protect the home front from foreign invasion (two sets of saboteurs were nevertheless landed in mid-1942 in Amagansett Long Island, and Punta Vedra, near Jacksonville). The US Coast Guard called this group of volunteers and their sail and motor vessels the Coastal Picket Patrol. More romantically they were known as the Corsair Fleet, and pejoratively as the Hooligan Navy. Others, like Parsons, opted to donate their vessels outright not to the US Coast Guard, but to the US Navy. Those donated to the navy tended to be larger in size. The tradition of donating or loaning large yachts to the US Navy dates at least to the First World War, and tales of the deplorable state the yachts were returned in make for colorful reading.

*Pleiades* was delivered to the US Navy at the Merrill-Stevens yard on the 9<sup>th</sup> of June, 1942. The Merrill-Stevens Dry Dock Company, located at 1270 Northwest 11<sup>th</sup> Street on the Miami River, was founded in 1885 in Jacksonville. It moved to Miami in 1923 and was foreclosed on in 2011. Until that time the firm claimed to be the oldest continually operating business in Florida, having survived 126 years. According to naval records, conversion on the *Pleiades* began the very day she was delivered and continued for roughly five weeks, until the 22<sup>rd</sup> of July, 1942. H. M. Wright oversaw the conversion. Two barbettes, fixed armored housings at the base of gun turrets, were manufactured for the vessel. Twin 50-caliber machine gun mounts were installed, along with a lead counterbalance weighing roughly 150 pounds on the after end of the forward gun. The instructions read “Government to furnish guns and assist in installation of two guns.” A life raft was installed on the cabin top, starboard side. At least 150

gallons of fuel were supplied, along with fresh water to fill all the water tanks. A ladder was constructed from the weather deck to the cabin deck on the starboard side symmetrical to the existing one to port. The companionway and seat to starboard of the pilot house were removed to enable another ladder to be fit connecting it to the pantry.



The plush interior of *Pleiades* before its conversion by the US Navy. *Rudder* magazine, November 1929, page 65. Photo by M. Rosenfeld. Courtesy of Mystic Seaport Museum of America and the Sea, Mystic, CT.

Chocks strong enough to accommodate a navy-furnished launch were installed on deck, as were pipe stanchions in the cabin. The engine room blowers were relocated and improved, as were suction ducts. A locker in the salon was converted to gas tanks, and tanks in the pilot house were removed. A mess table to accommodate a dozen men was installed, along with benches made of cypress. Pipe berths were rigged in the aft staterooms. An escape hatch was cut out



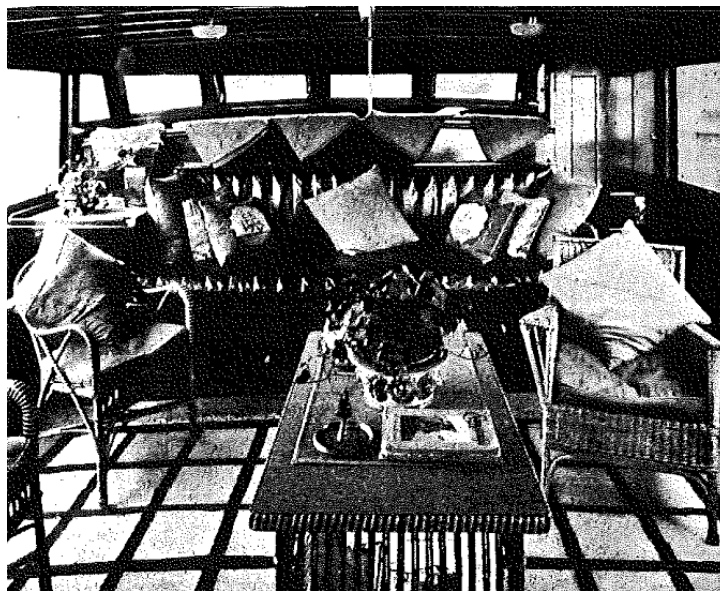
above the engine room. Air tanks were installed and connected to the engine room, and a 30-gallon drum on the main deck was fitted with pelican hooks for quick dumping. A gas tank was converted for lube-oil use and pipes run from the pilot house to the engine room. The bearings were re-packed, struts and propellers were ground, and zincs fitted. Engineers pulled pistons numbers five and six on both engines, and calibrated them and the liners. Connecting rod bearings were supplied, along with gaskets and valves. The four heat exchangers were found to be leaking and fitted with new gaskets. An escape ladder was installed on the door to the head, or bathroom, in the forward crew quarters. Another ladder connected the galley and the pantry. The shutters in the cabin were converted to the sliding type. Additional ventilators were installed throughout. The bilge vent was extended to exhaust outside and two buckets filled with sand were provided, along with a gasoline generator.

On deck ports were blanked with wood, the radio and cabinets were removed, as were dressing tables, awnings, and windshields. The salon windows were removed and blanked, the after cockpit was decked over, life rails were erected, and depth charge racks were fitted. Two small boats and their davits were removed. Hand pumps were fitted, as were ready-service boxes for ammunition for the .50-caliber anti-aircraft guns. Navigation, recognition, and signal lights were installed – to achieve this a pulsator switch was fitted to the mast, and blinker lights were mounted on the yard arm. A remote control cable from the bridge to the radio was fitted, as was an antenna on the mast. The electrical systems were completely overhauled, as were a number of pumps, a compressor, blowers, searchlight, and the batteries. The Frigidaire was recharged and repaired.

Two coats of camouflage painting were applied – the hull in Navy Blue 5-N and the above the deck Ocean Gray 5-O. There were splotches of paint applied above to confuse the

enemy. Masts were colored Haze Gray 5-H. Canvas coverings were dyed in Deck Blue 20-B. All marks and identifying names and numbers were carefully painted over. A designation number however was painted white on the bow. A pilot and engineer were procured for sea trials. Overall the cost of conversion was \$9,851.09, compared to an estimate of \$12,481.00, meaning the yard was \$2,629.91 under budget. Some of the work was shared with the Miami Shipbuilding Corporation.

*Pleiades* sailed from the Merrill-Stevens yard at 3:30 pm on the afternoon of July 22<sup>nd</sup> 1942. Soon she was to be renamed USS YP-453, the YP standing for yard patrol craft. According to Tim Colton “the Navy created its initial fleet of YPs from about sixty Coast Guard boats no longer needed after the end of prohibition. This fleet grew to about 650 for WWII, mostly by the acquisition and conversion of private yachts and fishing vessels. After the war, all these boats were sold off and the YP became a training craft, primarily at the U.S. Naval Academy” (Shipbuildinghistory.com).



Another image of *Pleiades* before the US Navy conversion. *Rudder* magazine, November 1929, page 65. Photo by M. Rosenfeld. Courtesy of Mystic Seaport Museum of America and the Sea, Mystic, CT.

*Pleiades* was formally accepted into service as USS YP-453 by the Seventh Naval District in Miami on Wednesday the 29<sup>th</sup> of July 1942 – this can be considered her commissioning date. Another source (Com. 7), states that *Pleiades* was “placed in service July 29 1942 at section base Port Everglades Florida,” and that Lieutenant Junior Grade (JG) George Callies, US Naval Reserve (USNR) was the officer in charge, however the telex was dated August 2, 1942 and may be referring to the vessel’s position at that later date. The Seventh Naval District extends from Jacksonville in the north to Miami in the south, along most of Florida’s eastern seaboard. This would have been a natural choice to deploy the vessel, as it was already located in the region and the need for defensive weaponry on that coast at that time was acute.

The decision to keep the former yacht close-by may have also reflected an opinion by the navy assessors that the boat was not fit for a long voyage to other destinations such as New York or New Orleans, or the Caribbean, though this would not be consistent with the navy outfitting the boat for service and manning it. If they didn’t think the yacht was seaworthy they would have never commissioned her in the first place. The Daily Admiralty Bulletin of the 5<sup>th</sup> of September 1942 noted that YP 453 was transferred to maintenance on the 28<sup>th</sup> of August 1942, indicating that there were at least some teething problems with the vessel, and perhaps some serious structural or propulsion-related issues which needed working out.

YP-453’s active career in the US Navy lasted between the 29<sup>th</sup> of July 1942 and the 5<sup>th</sup> of April 1943 - formally the 28<sup>th</sup> of July, 1943, when she was struck from the *Navy Register*, or

roster, exactly one day shy of a year since her commissioning. YP-453 patrolled the east coast of Florida from Miami to Jacksonville, including Cape Canaveral, where the majority of submarine attacks in the region took place. Her complement was vigilantly on the lookout for enemy submarines, coordinating with other all manner of vessels, from naval to merchant marine and coast guard. According to David Wright of Navsource.org, 30 July 1942 found the YP-453 busy with anti-submarine warfare (ASW) duties in the sea lanes between Palm Beach and Jupiter Inlet. A week later, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of August she performed escort duties for convoy KN 127 (Key West North) along with the US Navy tug *Sampson*. The following week she was escorting a freighter named SS *Florida* from Miami to join another convoy.

By 26 August 1942 YP-453 was on standby duty in her home port of Port Everglades with YP-248 and the *Koasa*. By the 4<sup>th</sup> of September she took up special duty off the torpedoed and largely abandoned freighter SS *La Paz*, which was carrying cases of whisky from Virginia to Chile and was beached off Fort Pierce, Florida. On 21 October the men were en-route to Fort Pierce, and the 5<sup>th</sup> of November found them bound back to Port Everglades. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of December 1942 YP 453's new commanding officer, G. S. Kilner, like his predecessor a Lieutenant junior grade in the US Naval Reserve, assumed command of the former *Pleiades*. A day later he was joined by C. H. Lindenberg, Lt. (jg), USNR, who served as executive officer, and five days later by R. J. Nesbit, also Lt. (jg) USNR and two ensigns in the USNR, E. S. Powell and D. J. O'Connell. Together with 14 other sailors of various ranks, there were 19 souls on board, at the most, since various personnel rotated off the vessel.



YP-248 ex-*Benmar*, a 57-foot Chris Craft converted for navy duty in WWII. She worked in tandem with YP-453 on at least two occasions in 1942 and 1943. From WWII Archives, [wwiarchives.net/servlet/photo/2638/760](http://wwiarchives.net/servlet/photo/2638/760).

The New Year found Lt. Kilner in command and the ex-*Pleiades* in Miami by 17 January 1943. By 3 February they were patrolling between Port Everglades and Fowey Rocks, southeast of Miami. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of March they had moved north to patrol between Palm Beach and Port Everglades. On the 17<sup>th</sup> they were on guard duty at Port Everglades (David Wright email, November 19, 2015). At the end of March, 1943, YP 453 was stationed at the Port Everglades Section Base, still in the Seventh Naval District, still patrolling up and down the tempestuous Gulf Stream. They were also escorting merchant vessels between Florida and the Bahamas, which required regular sailings for mail, supplies, and personnel, civilian and military. Even the Duke of Windsor, wartime governor of the colony, and his wife Wallis Simpson, required occasional escort on their yacht *Gemini* and other craft between the islands and the mainland (Edward du Moulin, *My Life*, Herreshoff Museum Press, Bristol RI 2008)

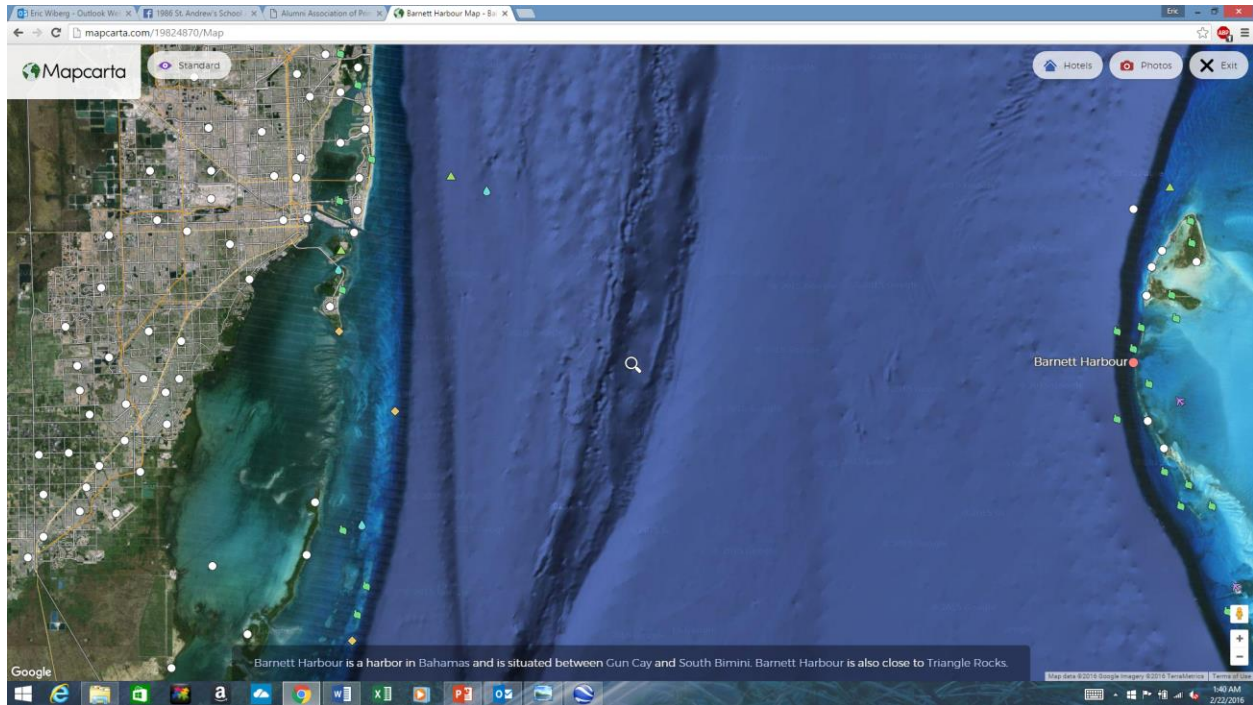
The first sign of trouble that spring appears in the *War Diary* of the Commander, Gulf Sea Frontier, on Monday, April 5, 1943. Entitled “YP-453 Aground at Entrance to South

Bimini,” it reads: “The YP-453, escorting three small merchant vessels from Miami to Nassau, ran aground at the entrance to South Bimini and requested assistance. The CGR-7007 was ordered to proceed to the scene, weather permitting. The three merchant vessels proceeded independently to their destination.” (letter from Nathaniel Patch, RDTR2, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, MD, to author of April 2, 2013). The following day (Tuesday), it was reported that “The CG-7007 departed Port Everglades at 0650 EWT today to assist the YP-453. ...The time of her arrival was estimated at 0830 EWT. The YT-338 escorted by the YP-248 departed Miami today at 0900 EWT for the same purpose. They were expected to arrive at 1400 EWT.” The YT-338 was a US Navy tug built in Chicago in 1942 and delivered in November of that year. She was later designated YT-338 *Nesutan* (Hans van der Ster, Marcol Archieff Production, [www.towingline.com](http://www.towingline.com)). YP-248 was built as the *Benmar* in Algonic, Michigan in 1940. She was a 57-foot Chris Craft converted power yacht ([shipbuildinghistory.com/history/smallships/yp](http://shipbuildinghistory.com/history/smallships/yp)).

By Wednesday, April 7<sup>th</sup> the situation showed glimmers of hope. Two other naval vessels were dispatched to assist: YP-612 and YHB-14, which left Miami that day at 8 am. But even the rescuers required rescue: by 10:45 am YP-612, built in 1926 as the yacht *Maroc* of 93 feet, was limping ahead on a single engine while trying to repair the other one. By 11:15 am they informed the Seventh Naval District that they were unable to make running repairs, so YP-534 was dispatched from Port Everglades to render assistance. Both vessels returned to Port Everglades by 5:50 pm that evening. Meanwhile YP-453 had four compatriot vessels standing by off South Bimini: CG-7007, YT-338, YP-248 and YHB-14, which had arrived earlier that day. Though the former *Pleiades* was still aground, the war diarist noted that “operations are proceeding satisfactorily and it is expected to be refloated with the next high tide.”

Indeed on Thursday April 8<sup>th</sup> the tug YT-338 was able to advise headquarters that at 12:24 pm YP-453 was refloated. Although “the hull was full of water ...the vessel still had sufficient buoyancy to float. The tug was attempting to tow her to a protected anchorage in the area.” There were at that time 10 men aboard YP-453 and they transferred to YHB-14, which then left South Bimini at 12:55 pm bound for Miami. It would be the end of Lt. Kilner’s and his men’s working relationship with their charge. For the better part of four days, from Monday the 5<sup>th</sup> to Thursday the 8<sup>th</sup>, the men of YP-453 struggled to salvage their vessel. It must have been a sleepless period, wet, cold, exposed to the elements, fighting around the clock against the incoming water. What is not known is whether the boat was an anchor when it dragged ashore, whether it lost propulsion, was flooded, or simply drifted there. No official reason is given for why the patrol craft left its convoy duties in the first place, and why they didn’t enter the harbor in Bimini right away.

As for the YP-453, her deep draft in such a semi-submerged state prevented her from being towed into the harbor at Alice Town, Bimini for repairs. Instead the small convoy (four vessels including the YP-453) headed south for the comparatively scant shelter provided by small cays south of Bimini. At 5:10 pm the Seventh Naval District’s Salvage Officer instructed CG-7007 to take over YP-453 at Barnett Harbour, on the Great Bahama Bank. The Coast Guard vessel’s instructions were to stand by the abandoned patrol craft.



A satellite image showing Barnett Harbour, between South Bimini and Gun Cay, Bahamas (to right) and Miami's Biscayne Bay to the left. The term "harbor" to describe Barnett is a misnomer, as it is really just a part of the lip of the shallow Great Bahama Bank. The two are separated by roughly 50 miles of turbulent Gulf Stream ocean

(<http://mapcarta.com/19824870/Map>).

Barnett Harbour is little more than a cluster of rocks barely above sea level, but constitutes a destination or waypoint for vessels coming across the Gulf Stream from Florida and accessing the shallower and comparatively sheltered waters of the Great Bahama Bank. Barnett Harbour is located in position 25°38'15"N by 79°19'00"W. It is three miles north of Gun Cay, which itself lies just north of North Cat Cay, and 3.25 miles south of Port Royal, South Bimini Island, which lies just south of Alice Town and Bailey Town on North Bimini, the capital of the Bimini District of the Bahamas. The region is known above all as a deep sea fishing destination



due to its direct and easy proximity to Florida and the Gulf Stream. It is one of the first landfalls in the Bahamas, being only 44 nautical miles east of the cut outside Miami's Biscayne Bay.

By Friday the 8<sup>th</sup> of April YP-453 was intentionally beached. The navy and coast guard personnel continued to try to save her for a week or so, since there is a further entry regarding YP-453 on Thursday April 15<sup>th</sup>. That entry indicates that the former *Pleiades* was "aground on Bahama Bank and damaged beyond repair." Then the little ship's death knell was struck: "Authority was requested to strike it from the Navy list and destroy the hull after salvaging the engines and other removable material" (Com. 7, R-152105). A postscript relates that "all possible machinery and material [was] removed and stored; hulk has broken up."

Indeed, on the 28<sup>th</sup> of July 1943 USS YP-453 was formally stricken from the United States Navy Register and given up for good. There is no telling exactly how the engines and other machinery (winches, generator) were disposed of, or whether or not they were auctioned off to locals in nearby Bimini rather than transported back to Florida. In a navy press release dated October 2<sup>nd</sup> 1943 the patrol craft was reported "destroyed by grounding in the Bahamas 15 April 1943." A subsequent *Naval Intelligence Report of Losses* dated May 2, 1946 simply states that the vessel was "Destroyed by Grounding."

Since World War II, and particularly the advent and popularization of SCUBA diving from the 1970s onward there have been persistent rumors of a German submarine in the Bimini Islands. Aside from a discounted report of a piece from U-432 in the Abaco Islands (the submarine never came to the Bahamas – in fact it never left northern Europe), the most emphatic claims of sub sightings point to Bimini. Diving entrepreneur Stuart Cove reports that a submarine was reported off Bimini and that divers blew apart the hull in the 1980s to get better

access. As a result, the hull has broken up and disintegrated. Others report clearly seeing a submarine off Bimini from the air.

While it might be possible that the US Navy, which conducts extensive and secret submarine tests on nearby Andros (at their AUTECH, or Atlantic Undersea Testing and Evaluation Center), left the carcass of a submarine there, it is highly unlikely that the only German submarine known to have been sunk within hundreds of miles (U-157 sunk off Key West), could have drifted north in the Gulf Stream to Bimini. Sunken subs simply don't float north – they don't float at all. Could it be possible that the World War II submarine which divers and enthusiasts have been reporting off Bimini was in fact the remains of *Pleiades*, or YP-453?

Queries to a number of diving operators in Bimini are inconclusive. None of the present-day operators, including Stuart Cove and salvage expert Marcus Mitchell have actually dived on or witnessed the alleged submarine. The mystery – and whether the loss of YP-453 had anything to do with it – remains unsolved. Most likely, with her fittings and machinery gone the YP-453's wooden hull and beams would have disintegrated quickly, and there would be almost nothing left of the vessel and its hull except stringers, fasteners and odds and ends from her construction in the Bronx in 1929. Even these would be likely buried deep in the sand or covered with coral in the intervening 73 years.