

The Duane & Bibb

The “Duane & Bibb” were Coast Guard cutters that were sunk off Key Largo. They were intentionally sunk in 1987 as part of an artificial reef program in the Florida Keys. Both cutters are 327 feet long and the Duane is at a depth of around 100 feet. She’s upright with a slight lean to the starboard side. The Bibb is less frequently visited and lies totally on her side. Diving to either wreck is for advanced divers only because of the depth and because of the strong currents.

Both cutters were built in the 1930s and served more than fifty years. Duane and Bibb cutters were used in World War II and in the Vietnam War. The Duane distinguished herself in a number of ways. She helped to sink a German U-Boat during World War II. The Duane also served in the early 1980s in the *Marinel Boat Lift*, when they transported refugees from Cuba to Florida. She was also a member of the Coastal Surveillance Force during the Vietnam War, off the coast of Vietnam. Now she serves as a habitat for reef fish and other organisms in the clear waters of Key Largo. Both ships served as rescue boats for many years.

Fivers who spearfish report seeing Wahoo, Grouper, and large Amber Jacks. Both wrecks are fished heavily, so people advise getting there early if you want to dive.

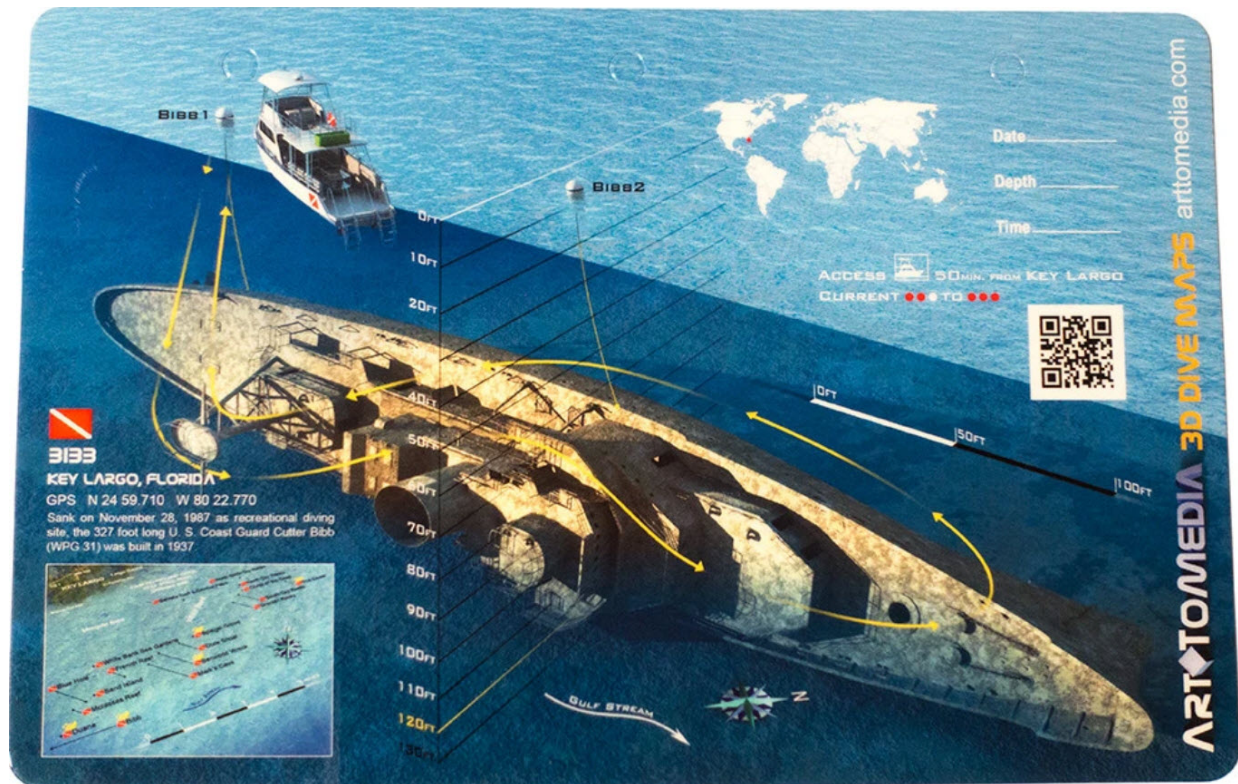
The Bibb





The USCGC George M. Bibb, known locally as the Bibb, was named after the Secretary of the Treasury under President John Tyler. She was built in 1936 as a part of a group of seven vessels that included the Duane. The 327ft. long Bibb lies on her starboard side. She was sunk the day after the Duane in 1987.

Like the Duane, the Bibb rescued many hundreds of people from disasters at sea. One of the Bibb's most famous rescues was of 202 survivors off the Merchant Marine ship SS Henry Mallory on a single day in 1943. She served patrol and escort duty in the North Atlantic, Caribbean Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Vietnam, and the Pacific Ocean. In 1945 the Bibb served as the landing operations flag ship in the invasion of Okinawa.



The Bibb rests on her starboard side. As you descend, you will touch her gunwale around 100ft. and the deepest part in the sand is at 135ft. The Bibb is very much coral, and sponge covered with a myriad of fish life living in and around this warship.

This dive is an advanced level dive, even more so than the Duane due to its depth. All dive operators require either an Advanced Dive Certification with recent diving experience or to be able to show two eighty foot or deeper dives in your logbook within the last 12 months. You can also hire one of Key Largo's experienced dive Instructors or Dive Masters to take you on a guided dive. You should arrange a minimum of one week in advance of your trip.

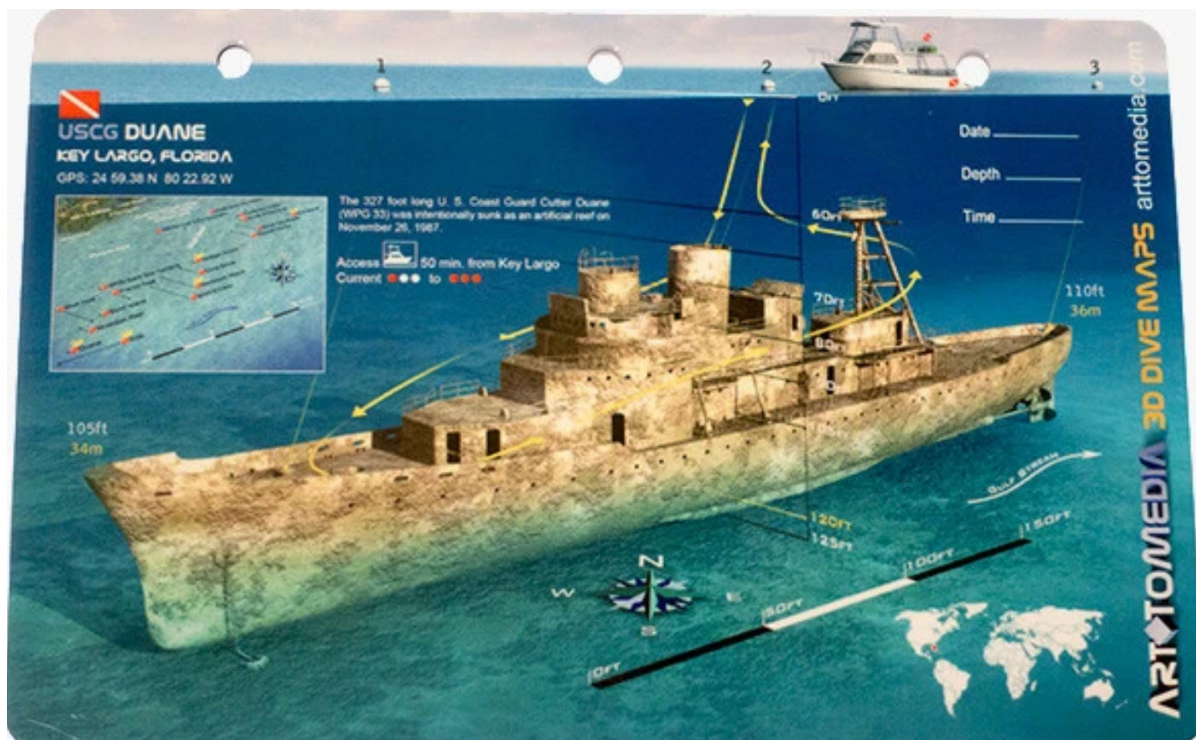
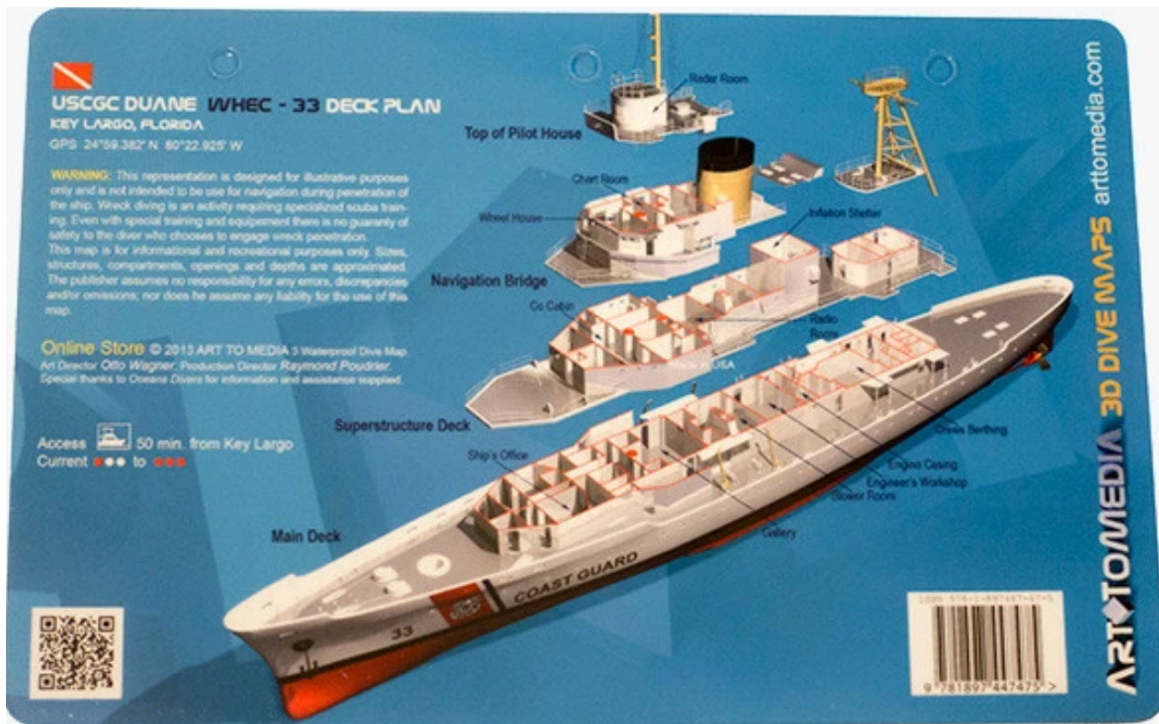
The Duane



The USCGC William J. Duane (WPG-33), none simply as the Duane, is a 327ft Coast Guard Cutter that was named after the Secretary of the Treasury under President Andrew Jackson. She was built in 1936 along with six other Coast Guard Cutters.

The Duane had a very storied career. She served patrol duty in the North Atlantic and Viet Nam. She served convoy escort duty in 1942, served as the flag ship for Major General John O'Daniel

who headed Operation Dragoon during the D-Day invasion and assisted in the sinking of a German U-Boat. The Duane has a connection to the history of the State of Florida. She served escort duty during the Mariel Boat Lift which brought thousands of Cuban Refugees to the Florida Keys in 1980. Her proudest accomplishments were the hundreds of lives saved during her service.



The Duane was sunk in 1987 and quickly became the number one wreck dive in the United States of America. She sits upright in the sand at a maximum depth of 125ft. Her deck is at 100ft. and the top of the crow's nest is at 50ft. You can see most any of the varied reef fish that Key Largo offers. The exciting part of diving on the Duane is the squadron of Great Barracuda that patrol the area and the pelagic species that just might swim by such as Bull Sharks and the occasional Whale Shark in the early spring.

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