The Freeport Liberty Ship Reef is actually composed of two Liberty Ships, the William F. Allen and the B.F. Shaw, and one T-2 tanker, the V.A. Fogg (previously named Four Lakes). Ten other Liberty Ships and one T-2 tanker are located at other reef sites along the Texas coast. Brochures for these reef sites are available from Texas Parks and Wildlife.

The William F. Allen received the Philippine Liberation Ribbon for her crew’s services in the winter of 1944-5, including their support of the invasion of Leyte Island. For efforts in repelling a Luftwaffe attack while in convoy across the Mediterranean, the B.F. Shaw was awarded the Operation and Engagement Star. The V.A. Fogg survived several perilous Atlantic convoy crossings during World War II before a disastrous benzene explosion in 1972 caused her to sink in her present location.

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Credits
Historical research conducted by Texas Historical Commission, Austin

Photos courtesy of the National archives.
Texas Artificial Reefs

A Tribute to the Lone Star State

Texas has been involved in artificial reef development for over 50 years. Numerous reef building materials have been used over the years. However, the first highly successful artificial reef development occurred during the mid-1970’s when 12 obsolete Liberty Ships were sunk at five different sites in the Gulf of Mexico. Texas Parks and Wildlife’s Artificial Reef Program has added materials to most of these sites and created others through programs like Rigs-to-Reefs, in which petroleum companies donate obsolete petroleum platforms to the Program.

At these sites, anglers may encounter numerous fish species including amberjack, snapper, cobia, Atlantic spadefish, triggerfish, tarpon, sharks (such as the blacktip, tiger, dusky, and hammerhead), and grouper. In addition, divers may see colorful damsel fish, butterflyfish, blennies, and countless invertebrates. As of this printing, 40 artificial reef sites have been established to benefit the environment by creating habitat for marine organisms, and to provide areas for increased fishing and sport diving opportunities.

Type EC-2 Liberty Ship
441 feet overall

Type T-2 Tanker Four Lakes
525 feet overall

The water depth at the Freeport Liberty Ship Reef is 100-102 feet, and the depth to the deck of the ship wrecks is approximately 70-80 feet. Other reef materials at this site include: six Rigs-to-Reefs structures donated by Cal-Dive International which were positioned in the shape of a star, 300 fly ash blocks donated by Houston Lighting & Power Company and placed near the V.A. Fogg, and a welded pipe structure donated by Conoco and Galveston County.