



The Duane, Key Largo, Florida, USA.

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The Duane, Key Largo, Florida, USA. The United States Coast Guard Cutter (USCGC) William J. Duane, also known as the Duane, is a 99.7 m (327 ft) decommissioned military vessel that was named after the Secretary of the Treasury under President Andrew Jackson. The Duane was built in 1936 along with six other Coast Guard Cutters and has had a much storied career. The vessel patrolled over a great many years in the waters of the North Atlantic and Viet Nam. Most notably, it served as a convoy escort in 1942, was assigned as the flagship for Major General John O'Daniel who headed Operation Dragoon during the D-Day invasion of World War II, and assisted in the sinking of several German U-boats. The Duane also has a connection to the history of the state of Florida. It served escort duty during the Mariel Boat Lift which brought thousands of Cuban refugees to the Florida Keys in 1980. Some of the proudest accomplishments for this vessel were the hundreds of lives saved during its service.

The Duane was intentionally sunk in 1987 and quickly became one of the most popular scuba diving wrecks in the United States. The vessel sits upright in the sand at a maximum depth of 38.1 m (125 ft), about 1.6 km (1 mi) south of Molasses Reef in Key Largo, Florida. The deck is approximately at a depth of 30.5 m (100 ft) and the top of the crow's nest (which continuously carries an American flag, as shown in the image) is found approximately 15.2 m (50 ft) below the surface of the water. A variety of reef fish, coral, sponges, algae, and other marine invertebrates have made the Duane their permanent home. Resident predators, such as great barracuda (*Sphyraena barracuda*) and bull sharks (*Carcharhinus leucas*), frequently patrol the wreck for food, while pelagic species, such as whale sharks (*Rhincodon typus*) and great whites (*Carcharodon carcharias*), have been known to pass through. The Duane was added to the US National Register of Historic Places on May 16, 2002. (Photograph taken 20 July 2021 by Chris Makowski, Coastal Education & Research Foundation (CERF), Coconut Creek, Florida, USA.)