

U.S.C.G.C. Mackinaw WAGB-83 Radio call “NRKP” Remembered. The Cutter Mackinaw was born in Toledo Ohio during WWII in response to war time demands. In order to keep shipbuilding moving on the lakes in winter to sustain steel production. Congress authorized the construction of a state of the art heavy icebreaking vessel that would be permanently stationed in the Great Lakes.

The Toledo Shipbuilding Company laid her keel on 20 March 1943. Various delays in completion involved such heavy penalties that the firm was forced into bankruptcy and the contract was taken over by the American Shipbuilding and Drydock Co. Less than a year later the hull was launched and fitting out began. The Mackinaw was commissioned a few months later, at the cost of 10 million, arriving at her homeport, Cheboygan, Michigan 30 Dec 1944, where she has been stationed ever since.



When commissioned, Mackinaw was the most powerful and capable icebreaker in the world. She is still the standard by which other icebreakers are measured.

My personal pride with the Mighty Mack is the fact that I had sent literally hundreds of operational and ciphered messages to her via radio circuits from Secondary Radsta Soo Michigan (NOG) in the early 60's.

It was a joy to recognize NRKP The Mighty Mack on 4337 HF CW and give her the QRV signal (I am ready to Copy).



The Mighty Mack was relieved and moved under its own power from her berth 21 June 2006 from her port of decommissioning Cheboygan to a permanent berth at the SS Chief Wawatam dock at her name sake port Mackinaw City Michigan.

At present the Tri County Emergency Communications Group has submitted a proposal to the Mackinaw Museum, to establish a permanent Ham Station aboard with the installation of at least one repeater station. We are in hope that once again that Radio Space behind the wheel house will be alive with RF as she once was and may she always be!

The U.S. Coast Guard has cooperated immensely with the gift of vessels once telegraph equipped, plying the waters of the Inland Seas. They include the USCGC Acacia, USCGC Bramble, CGC McLane & USCGC Sundew berthed in Duluth, Mn. To visit these retired, proud vessels will be a quickening to the soul of those of us that manned the radio room cw watch. Look at www.imradioha.org for further extensive data and pictures of the C.G. Cornbelt Radio System. Partially scripted from continuouswave.com W8SU 2007