



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

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U. S. COAST GUARD LORAN STATION POINT ARGUELLO

The history of Point Arguello Loran begins long before the establishment of Vandenberg Air Force Base which presently surrounds us in our duties here. The Light was commissioned on February 22, 1901 in accordance with operations under the U. S. Lighthouse Service of the Treasury Department. Mr. W. A. Beeman served as the first of many Lighthouse Keepers who were given the responsibility of maintaining the station.

Between 1901 and 1903, the Lighthouse remained under the Treasury Department. It was then transferred to the Department of Commerce. The service operated as a part of the Commerce Bureau from 1910 until 1939, when it was returned to the Treasury Department and the Coast Guard. Since then, it has remained a Coast Guard Station, and moved to Department of Transportation April 1, 1967.

Though Point Arguello has been primarily a Light Station since the time it was first established, at one time it also hosted the small town of Arlight. Here existed a Post Office, blacksmith shop, school, and small store. This was quite some time before Arguello became the present Loran Station it is today. The purpose of the Light Station has always been to warn and guide the mariner along his journey; that is if they would heed the warnings the mainlight tells them.

Point Arguello Light Station has continued to operate even though the town around it was abandoned September 6, 1935. The Lifeboat Station which was located near here was disestablished September 8, 1952, and the Coast Guard Group Office at Point Arguello was disestablished July 1, 1955. None of these milestones which came and passed ever really interrupted the existence of the Light Station. It has gone from an old kerosene lamp to its present dual rotating beacon. Although the missions we perform have increased considerably and all the original buildings have changed, Point Arguello still provides guidance and warning to the wandering seafarer.

The primary mission of the present day station is to supply Aids to Navigation covering various ranges. The LORAN-A, Long Range Navigation, is a double-pulsed secondary function. We are paired with Coast Guard Stations San Mateo Point on Rate 1H4, and Point Arena on Rate 1H5. For intermediate ranges of navigation, Point Arguello transmits Radiobeacon signals in sequence with those of Los Angeles and Point Loma Light Stations. Sound signals continue to blast their way through the fog, and the everlasting Main Lights of Point Arguello, and unmanned Pt. Conception keep the mariners off the rocks and safe to sea.

The compliment of men required to operate this station is but eleven men. Presently, there are sixteen on board for duty. Each man is required to be familiar with the watchstanding procedures in order to assure that all Ais to Navigation are operating properly. Each man has a more specific job to do as well, which pertains to the field of his particular rating. The rates required are varied. Each is as important as the next to maintain the station at its best operating level.

Not only have the men of Point Arguello had to keep a light burning, but they have also been required to rescue some of the lives of the men that for one reason or another failed to heed the warning of the light, and ended up aground in the area. Also, the men have assisted in the rescue of people fallen from surrounding cliffs. All this has held in keeping with the highest traditions of the old Lighthouse Service and the present day Coast Guard with its motto "SEMPER PARATUS" in that we are always ready.

More should and could be told about the history of the U. S. Coast Guard Loran Station here at Point Arguello, and the people that have been connected with it down through the years. But time doesn't permit as much, and the people that open this Bicentennial Time Capsule in 2076 should know that there was indeed an American Coast Guard Station here on South Vandenberg this date.

W. F. Towne
ETC W. F. TOWNE
PROSPECTIVE OIC

D. D. Larson
ETC D. D. LARSON
OFFICER IN CHARGE

U. S. COAST GUARD LORAN STATION POINT ARGUELLO
PIECES OF HISTORY

FROM
VISITORS LOG AND OTHER
OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL SOURCES

February 22, 1901	Station placed in commission, kerosene oil lamp used.
February 7, 1911	SS SANTA ROSA wrecked on rocks at Pt. Perdenales.
January 18, 1912	Telephone service installed.
January 4, 1913	Vapor light installed.
September 7, 1923	7 Navy Destroyers wrecked on rocks at Pt. Perdenales, 23 men lost their lives.
March 15, 1925	Installed 250,000 candlepower light.
April 1, 1925	New Post Office built at Arlight.
September 25, 1925	New schoolhouse opened for classes.
February 21, 1926	Moved Post Office to Light Station.
April 1, 1926	Installed new electric light at Light Station.
May 30, 1931	SS HARVARD wrecked on rocks off Pt. Arguello.
May 28, 1933	SS NIPPON MARU wrecked on rocks at Pt. Perdenales.
August 20, 1934	Installed double diaphone fog signal.
October 1, 1934	Changed power of main light to 1,200,000 candlepower.
September 6, 1935	Town of Arlight abandoned.
February 15, 1940	Moved all equipment into new signal building.
October 18, 1940	Old board road removed and replaced by oil surface road.
January 12, 1948	LORAN Station established.
March 15, 1949	Remodeled assistant keepers quarters into triplex.
July 11, 1949	SS KALURUNCHIS wrecked on rocks north of Pt. Arguello.
March 12, 1950	Remodeled keepers quarters into barracks.
September 8, 1952	Pt. Arguello Lifeboat Station dis-established.
1952 - 1953	New LORAN building built.
March 25, 1953	Surf - Honda road paved.
May 29, 1954	Radiobeacon antenna erected.
1954 - 1955	Present duplexes built.
July 1, 1955	Pt. Arguello Group Office dis-established.
September 4, 1959	Navy Surf - Honda road opened.
April 1, 1962	Super - Tyfon fog signal placed in operation.
December 16, 1963	SS ELLIN wrecked on rocks at Pt. Perdenales.
September 1967	Present light constructed, old buildings demolished.
January 11, 1970	Motor Sailer PERSEPHONE wrecked on rocks 2 miles south of Pt. Arguello.
May 17, 1974	2 men fell from cliff one mile south of Pt. Arguello, station personnel gave first aid and assisted Vandenburg AFB Rescue Squad raise victims. One victim later died of injuries.
July 1976	Operations Normal