



USCGC BRAMBLE



[HOME](#)

[ABOUT US](#)

[HISTORY](#)

[CONTACT US](#)



History: The retired USCGC Bramble (WAGL/WLB-392) is one of 39 180-foot Seagoing Buoy Tenders designed and built in the early 1940s for the U.S. Coast Guard.

USCGC Bramble (WLB-392) is one of the 39 original 180-foot (55 m) seagoing buoy tenders built between 1942-1944 for the United States Coast Guard. The Coast Guard Cutter Bramble was commissioned in 1944 at a cost of just over \$925,000. Following World War II, the Bramble participated in "Operation Crossroads," the first test of an atomic bomb's effect on surface ships, at Bikini Island. In 1957, along with the cutters Spar and Storis, it headed for the Northwest Passage, traveling through the Bering Straits and Arctic Ocean. Traveling for 64 days through 4,500 miles of partially uncharted waters, the vessels finally reached the Atlantic Ocean. These three surface vessels were the first to circumnavigate the North American Continent, an ambition mariners have had for more than 400 years.

In 1962, the Bramble transferred to Detroit to perform the missions of search and rescue, icebreaking, and law enforcement throughout the Great Lakes, in addition to aids to navigation. In 1975, the Bramble reported to Port Huron. The cutter's areas of responsibility included eastern Lake Erie, southern Lake Huron and Saginaw Bay, and maintaining 187 buoys, one NOAA weather buoy, and three fog signals. During winter months, its capabilities as an icebreaker enabled it to escort ships through ice and assist ships in distress. The Bramble was decommissioned in 2003 to be used as a museum.

Awards: Throughout Bramble's service it was awarded many awards and ribbons. She received the Department of Transportation Gold Medal, CG Unit Commendation, CG Meritorious Unit Commendation, CG "E" Ribbon, CG Bicentennial Unit Commendation, American Campaign Medal, WWII Victory Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal, Arctic Service Medal and the Special Operations Service Ribbon.

ARCTIC NORTHWEST PASSAGE 1957



BIKINI ATOMIC TEST 1946



1944 - USCGC Bramble, Ice Breaker Class

Still Spry @ 75 (Seventy Five)

She's on the move - left Port Huron on her way to Montreal

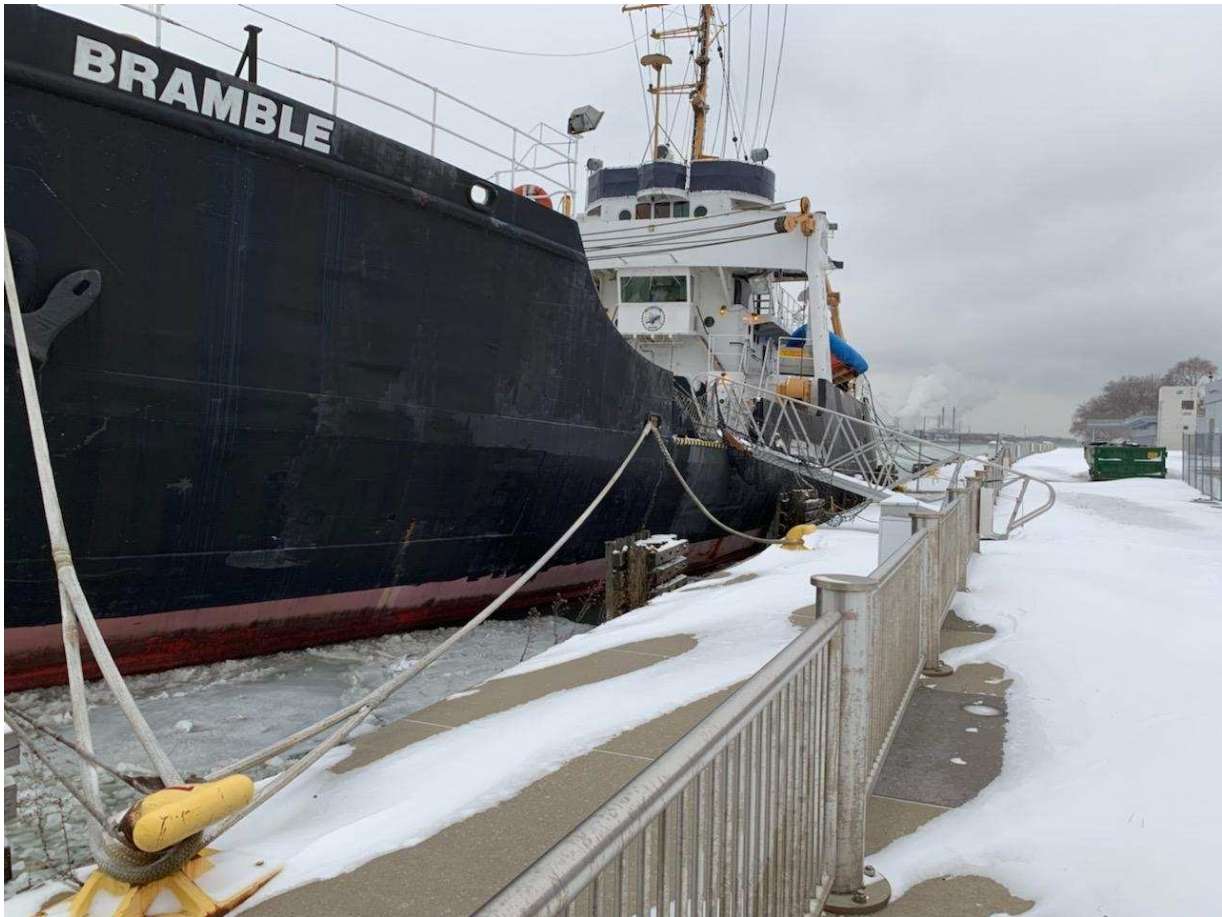
She, USCGC Brambel, server her country valiantly for decades. From the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans to the Artic and Great Lakes no task was too big.

At the spry young age of 75 she will be heading out to retrace the steps she took as a teenager, 14. We wish her a smooth and safe journey!

Some say you would need to have [ice running through her veins](#), see picture, to attempt this so I guess we can check that off. Our hopes and prayers are with her as she prepares for this epic journey and wish calm smooth seas ahead.

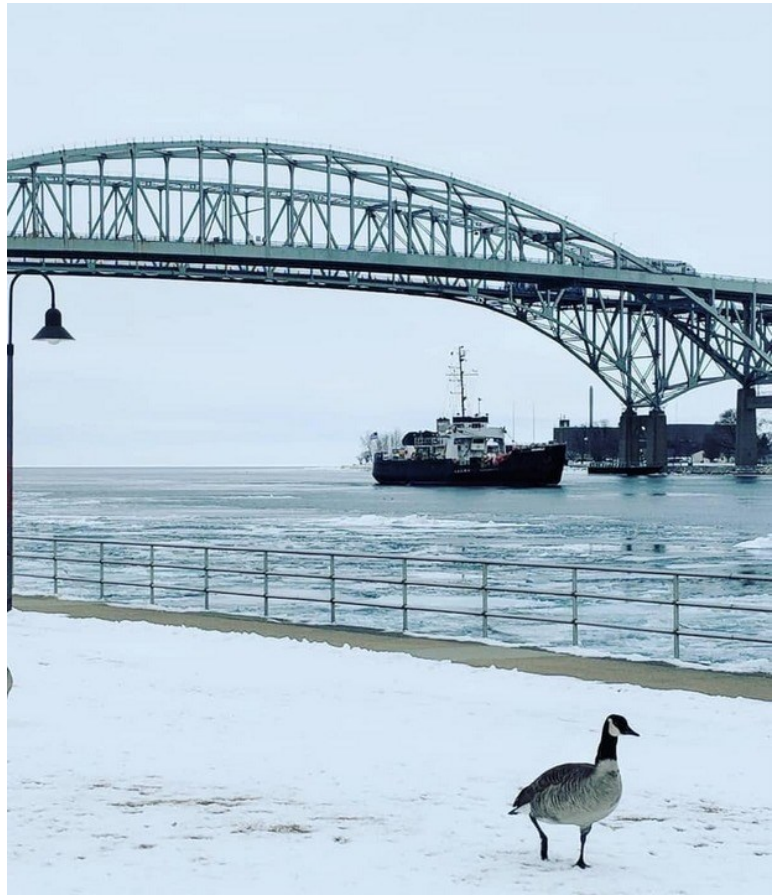
She will be departing from her birth in Port Huron in the next month or so to make her way to the gulf where she will under go a shipyard period to get her ready for her departure from Miami the later part of May.





Bramble working





Ice Breaking Sea Trials February 2019



Yes, her sea strainer is full of ICE!





A3Pi Services LLC
Marine Consultants & Surveyors

1610 N. Prospect Ave, Milwaukee, WI 53202 U.S.A.

Phn: 708.903.6289 Fax: 815.943.9494

Email: BobOjala@sbcglobal.net Website: A3Pi.com

19 March 2019

McGriff, Seibels & Williams of Texas, Inc.
818 Town & Country Lane, Suite 500
Houston, TX 77024

Attn: Mr. Jeffrey Buchanan

I am the Marine Surveyor who performed the recent Condition Survey for Valuation onboard the M/V “Bramble”, the old Coast Guard ice breaker. I have some extra comments on the conditions seen during my survey, which are probably not best suited for a formal C&V Survey, but may be relevant to its condition, as well as the contemplated voyage planned by this current owner.

Although it may not seem totally relevant to my comments, it was great to get aboard the “Bramble” again, having sailed on her back in the 1960’s, when I was a young, enlisted Coast Guardsman. The experience gained from the Coast Guard, and from the Bramble in particular, led me to attending the University of Michigan, where I received my B.S.E. in Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering. With that degree, I have worked for a small shipyard, building vessels of this size, worked for an engine company for a short period, at which time we bid on the repower of the Bramble and other Cutters in this class, and then spent 17 years with the American Bureau of Shipping (ABS), both in new construction as well as performing hundreds of surveys and drydockings.

In 1989, I started A3Pi Services, and have traveled the world performing unusual vessel condition and damage surveys, from the Ukraine to Yap, fishing vessels to super tankers and numerous cruise ships, as well as the more “mundane” damages and drydocking for insurance interests. You can check out my experience at www.a3pi.com.

I give this preface to my following statements, because I want you to understand my experience with unusual vessels and that I know how to evaluate both a vessel’s structure and operational status, based upon many years of training and first-hand experience. I don’t wish to brag, but I believe my practical, common sense approach has kept my services in demand all these years, and I approach my work with a much higher level of responsibility and care than many Marine Surveyors.

So, back to the survey onboard the Bramble. I was not expecting much, because I had not been on board the Bramble since 1967, and knew it had been a museum ship since it was retired. Having worked with many such museums over the years, their lack of funding is typically the downfall of the vessel. I could tell the Bramble had received much better care than others I have seen, and I was impressed by the fact the museum had properly laid up and preserved the machinery, so it was capable of operation.

Partly because of my survey, but also out of historical interest, I spoke with the Captain, Chief Officer, Chief Engineer, and even three other crew members (engineer and two electricians) at length about the work they had accomplished and tests they had performed. These men have all sailed ocean vessels, are properly licensed, and have the experience and training necessary for this vessel. This information is not normally available or even required as a part of such a C&V Survey, so these conversations were

additional information, which I received by chance. I was impressed by the crew because these men had a history of working together in the past and they were noticeably a team, and not just a bunch of men looking for a job. From my conversations with these men, they wanted to be there and they understood how important their preparations were for the success of this operation. The Chief Engineer was not only preparing the machinery for operation, but one of the assistant engineers told me the Chief wanted to be able to “eat off the deck plates”. That is a sign of a very good and dedicated engineer! The two electricians I spoke with were rewiring the radio room and pilothouse for the new electronics required for these voyages. The long list of navigating and safety electronics shown in my report is enviable for any modern ship, however, this crew was aware of the need for updating the power requirements for this equipment. This rewiring and other improvements were being made everywhere. They had even refurbished the galley equipment!

Having experienced the Bramble’s ice breaking capability firsthand, I was glad to see the crew had a chance to break ice on Lake Huron, to see how well the Bramble performed. In the 1960’s, while on the Bramble, we were repeatedly used to assist freighters through Lake Huron, Lake Erie, and the Lake Superior approach into the Soo Locks. The Coast Guard was impressed then by the capability of the Bramble, which is probably why the Bramble had been chosen as part of the vessel team to make the 1957 Northwest Passage trip. Because I had actually read the vessel’s 1957 log books from that voyage, I told the current crew of the Bramble, she had performed admirably during the voyage.

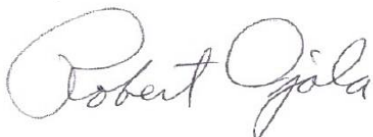
The trip to Mobile, Alabama for drydocking is certainly nothing to worry about for this vessel, and the machinery is now back to prime operating condition. Once the rewiring is completed, and the navigating electronics is installed, the Bramble is in better condition than most vessels on the Great Lakes. The ship was built for, and used by the Coast Guard in ocean service for the majority of its life, up until it was retired, so ocean voyages are of no real concern.

The drydocking in Mobile should confirm the hull condition is then capable of the Northwest Passage voyage. The conditions in the Northwest Passage are not nearly as formidable as they were in 1957. Apparently Global Warming or climate shifts have reduced the ice over the top of North America to the point where properly prepared recreational vessels are making the trip. With the drydocking, the new electronics, and the new creature comforts being installed on the Bramble, this looks to be a very safe, even enjoyable voyage. If I was a younger man, I might ask to make the trip.

In summary, it is my opinion the M/V “Bramble” is more than capable of the contemplated voyages planned, and the crew is properly prepared, licensed and dedicated to making these voyages safely.

Thank you for the opportunity to be of service.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert A. Ojala
Naval Architect/Marine Surveyor
A3Pi Services, LLC